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Volume 01 - The First Generation Was A Savage

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Prologue

The one I faced in the mansion's courtyard was my sister.

A perfect existence.

If someone out there were to be completely loved by god, it would probably be someone like her.

(Why did it come to this)

I hold my breath, and gripped the sabre I held in one arm with both of my hands. The tip of it was shaking.

It wasn't just fatigue. The emotion of fear was also apparent in the blade.

"Hah, hah…"

The sabre in my hands was real. My sister's rapier was real as well. For us to be seriously going at each other with weapons, I never would have thought it sane.

However, the one to propose this duel was, undoubtedly, her.

Wearing a dress, she spoke as she looked at me without any interest.

"Are you still going to continue this, onii-sama?"

While she called me onii-sama now, she usually doesn't even call my name. 'You,' 'that thing,' and other such phrases were how she usually referred to me.

But no one in the surroundings ever found fault in that.

She wore an ivory-colored dress and red shoes. Even though we were both exchanging slashes, unlike me, she wasn't sweating at all.

As if she was going to head off somewhere formal, her outfit was well in order. The rapier that sister held in her hands was an article made by a skilled craftsman.

It was adorned with ornaments, and the hilt was inlaid with a yellow orb. The gem that couldn't be made anymore in the current era was a special tool that brings forth special Skills.

The rapier it had been inserted into was a Magic Item, a weapon called a Magic Sword. It was a rare good that couldn't be bought even with a hundred gold coins.

With the sword in hand as a mismatch with her appearance, my sister's standing figure was in a mess.

This year, she was to turn thirteen. Flowing, golden hair waved on her head. Her figure was, unbefitting of her age, quite voluptuous.

Her blue eyes stared at me coldly.

Chills raced down my spine.

Scary. I wanted to run. But I could not.

"Not yet. We're not done yet!"

I forcefully contained my fear and stepped forward.

I had faith in my well-trained sword skills. I was confident that I wouldn't even lose to adults.

The Walt Family… in order to succeed our noble household, I received severe training from a young age. I was confident in my blade.

But…

"Hah, you sure are slow."

In the past, I was also a prodigy. A wonder child. They always showered me with praise. In order to answer to my parents and my family's

expectations, I desperately put in all my effort.

But that effort, before the sister two years younger than me, was useless.

Obviously, my sister was a girl. As swordsmanship was thought of as unnecessary for her, she didn't pick it up over the passage of years. She was just taught the basics, and all she should know was how to hold it and swing it.

Even so, I couldn't win against her.

"Wha!"

We clashed for an unknown amount of times, and my body was covered in numerous shallow cuts. Even when I slashed at her, she easily dodged with minimal movements.

At the same time, her whip-like rapier blade came down on my face, arms, and stomach.

"Just then, I could have given you three fatal wounds, Lyle."

The name of the girl who said my name with a smile on her face was Celes Walt.

If there ever was one loved by the heavens, anyone would think it was the sister before me. The only one to truly hate her was me.

Having my attack dodged, my legs buckled, and I fell over on the lawn.

My body was covered in blood. My clothes were sticking to me from my sweat.

My blue hair was also sticking to me, but I didn't pay it any mind. When I tried to stand, I saw those red shoes coming at me.

"Guh!"

I blocked with my arms, but I couldn't kill the momentum. My body floated a little before I rolled across the ground once more.

"How unsightly."

"Yes, truly… to think that this was our son, it's much too pitiful."

Where I collapsed were my mother and father.

We were surrounded by a majority of the retainers, but not a single one directed any encouragement at me.

(Father… mother… why…)

I wanted to cry. I bore the pain to stand up, and turned to find Celes's smile awaiting me.

"What could be the problem? Is that all you were, Lyle?"

She purposely called out my name to provoke me.

"Good grief. Even when Celes only learned the bare minimum of swordsmanship."

"It really should be Celes succeeding the Walt House."

My parent's words were directed at my back.

Even when they're ones who'll say things like this, they were once kind to me. The Sabre I held in my hands was an item they had prepared for me long ago.

『Lyle, you're also a man of House Welt. Only the best of weapons are fitting for your hand.』
『It suits you, Lyle. As expected of our son.』

They had continued directing a kind smile at me until around the time I turned ten.

After that, my parents came to dote on my sister Celes. It was around

then that they had lost interest in someone like me.

That wasn't something limited to this family.

The retainers, who had always treated me in a way fitting the future head of the household started treating Celes as their lord.

They spoke ill of me behind my back, and kept saying I wasn't fit to succeed.

Until I was ten, the household, and the populace had been expectantly waiting for me to take over.

But now was different. This was the reality.

"With this, Celes is the successor."
"Good grief, even if they didn't do something like this, all we had to do was drive the boy out."
"Even when there's no way he'd ever win against Celes-sama. What a fool."

It was so mortifying that tears began to come out.

(Just what did I ever do. Why must I be so hated!?)

Even Celes was my sister. It's not like I had hated her. I had treated her as a brother should.

Did Celes find something to hate in that?

"Ara, you're going to cry? You truly are unsightly."

She began laughing to herself. She looked like she's truly having fun.

"Why are you doing this! What did I ever do to you!?"

When I raised my voice, Celes's expression changed from smiling to expressionless.

"… How loud. It doesn't matter to you. It doesn't really matter to me

whether you're there or not. But since you became an eyesore, I'll have you out of here."

"W-what are you saying…"

She raised her left hand at me, and pointed her finger.

(She intends to use magic!?)

Looking behind, I saw that my parents and the rest of the household had noticed her actions and moved out of the way.

They had given silent approval of her attack.

"Dammit! Ice Wall!"

A wall of ice manifested in front of me.

It's a water attribute magic, and it's property is 'Shield'. In order to be praised… in order to make my parents turn my way, I had lost myself in training myself.

It wasn't just in the sword. Magic, and horse riding, and even knowledge… but in front of the existence in front of me, it was all worthless.

"Fire Bullet."

Showing her superiority, Celes started chanting magic after I had finished my preparations.
In contrast to me, it was a fire-attribute spell, and its level was among the basics of the basics. It was also quite a user-friendly one that merely produced a ball of fire.

The wall of ice I had created was chipped away by the fire all too easily.

It wasn't just a single shot.

From Celes's fingertip, she shot several hundred repetitions of the

same spell. Each and every one's output was quite high, and while my magic was supposed to triumph over it attribute-wise, I couldn't even win against Celes's elementary-level spells.

"Kuh, Earth Hand!"

From the ground around me, grew four arms made of earth. Each of them obeyed my will to attack her.

"How boring."

Celes smiled as she used the rapier in her hand to cut them all down. A rapier is, essentially, a weapon specialized in stabbing. With it, she used magic to easily cut them.

"Earth Bullet."

In order to win with versatility, I activated my next magic. Rocks shot up from the ground like cannon balls and tore up the lawn.

But I have no time to think about anything like that.

"Shield."

Without a change in expression, she casted it with a smile. A simple wall made of pure mana completely blocked my Earth Bullet.

It wasn't on Celes's level, but I had shot several dozen shots. Still, not a single one got through.

(I don't have any Mana left. I'll have to end it here…)

Even I could understand I had no prospects of victory. But I had to fight her no matter what.

Otherwise, I would be driven out of the house without having done anything.

What started this all was, as I thought, Celes's words.

『Hey, Father. This year, onii-sama will turn fifteen and become an adult. Is this not the time to hold a match to determine the future head of the Walt House?』

Normally, males would be the ones to succeed.

But my parents said she was correct. They acknowledged our match.

『The loser will leave the house. That's alright with you, right oniisama?』

She hated me, or perhaps she simply found me unpleasant. Like that, my fight with Celes had started.

Originally, it wasn't something that would ever have happened.

Having a girl succeed a household wasn't something that never happened. But in those cases, there were certain circumstances, such as the basic principles of the family.

House Walt has had a male successor for generations. From the founding first generation head, a direct line of males have handed down the family to one another.

It's a household with over two hundred years of history.

Even so, father and mother obeyed Celes's words and had the match with me, the eldest son, approved.

"Celes, never, to someone like you…!"

As I stepped in, I slashed at Celes with all my might. At my sister, who had the appearance of a frail girl, I cut down at full force.

From a third party perspective, I would definitely be the one at fault here. But somewhere in my heart, I understood it. My hundreds, my thousands, my hundreds of thousands of practice swings went into this blow.

The attack with all power behind it would cleave her in two if it

landed.

… If it landed, that is.

It's good that I was able to close in. The attack was the strongest I could muster at the moment.

But my stroke never reached her.

Turning half of her body to dodge the vertical slash, she swung up the rapier to deliver an attack at me. As if to torment me, she continued to carve light cuts into my body.

At this rate, it's never going to end.

"Not yet!"

As my dodged sword dug into the ground, I released my left hand from it and swung up with my right. With the first sword stroke, it traced a V into the air.

Seeing that, Celes's eyes opened wide.

It was my last resort.

It's a skill I had practiced in secret, but still, it didn't reach her. The blade cut close to her dress.

(She could even react to that?)

It was my special trump card, but Celes's reflexes had exceeded that. However, if you count the cut along her dress, it actually worked.

(It reached. My sword reached Celes!)

Looking from the sidelines, the sight of a brother getting pissed off against his younger sister must be repulsing. But as my opponent was Celes, there's no meaning to that.

Just see her pretty face be twisted in pain for a brief moment, made it

all worth it. We both took a step back, and while out of breath, I raised the corners of my lips.

This was the most resistance I could offer. Right now, this was all I could do.

"What's wrong, Celes?"

She looked down on me with an expressionless face, shaking. She must be feeling humiliated. How many times have I ever seen my sister Celes truly embarrassed before?

"… Don't call my name, filth."

"… Eh?"

By the time I noticed it, she had disappeared from my view. Her voice came from behind me.

As I turned around, her fist entered my sight.

(W-what?)

There wasn't any pain. By the time I noticed it, the sabre had left my hands, and I was sent sprawling in the air. Within my vision that seemed to see everything moving in slow motion, it seemed that Celes was the only one moving normally.

She approached and kicked me with those red shoes this time.

I looked up at her as I flew through the air and saw her preparing to fire off magic.

(This is bad, I'll die!)

I tried to muster up magic defenses immediately, but the magic Celes fired was a high-class one. It was a magic that required a considerable amount of skill as a magician.

She's really coming at me to kill me.

“Fire Storm.”

As I heard her disinterested voice, I also chanted.

“Water Ball!”

I wrung out my remaining power, and deployed my own magic around myself. A tempest of flames engulfed me and tried to burn me to death.

I had also activated magic, but I don’t know if this will block it.

All I understood was that the magic she just used was fired in an honest attempt to kill me.

“A-am I really that much of a hindrance to you, Celes!?”

As I called out, I flopped onto the ground. The impact rocked my body and pain raced all around it.

Coupled onto the pain I hadn’t been feeling up until now, the impact caused me to writhe on the ground. And my own Sabre fell beside me.

The tip pierced the earth, and its metal had turned a dull red from the heat.

If I grasped it I would definitely be burned, but still, I reached out my hand.

I’m not thinking of anything anymore, but I simply didn’t want to part with it. To me, the blade in front of my eyes was my final bond with my parents.

“A-ah…”

The surroundings watched me. Without even thinking about saving me, they looked upon me. Looking at me miserably crawling towards it, there were even those that laughed.

The only one to walk to me was the one with a vulgar smile on her

face, Celes.

“Serves you right. Although I’m a bit surprised you still managed to cling to life.”

Saying that, she broke the sword in front of my eyes. Perhaps because of the heat, or her own skill, the sabre was cut through as if it were made of not metal, but paper.

My extended hand fell to the ground in vain.

It grabbed onto the grass; I looked up with tears in my eyes. Using her left hand to fiddle with her hair, Celes had a full smile on her face.

“Oh, that was your favorite one, right? How unfortunate.”

She looked like she was having fun as she happily looked down on me. However, hearing my parent’s words, she turned around.

“Celes, that’s enough, isn’t it? Your clothes were ruined. How about we spend the day buying you a new dress?”
“Oh, that sounds nice, dear.”

There wasn’t a single soul to look at the beaten and burnt up me. They were already treating me as if I wasn’t there.

“P-please wait! Father, mother!”

I strained my voice and reached out my hand. But they merely turned their eyes to me once. Their gaze were still one where they were looking at something filthy.

And like that, I let my head fall to the ground.

I let out my voice and cried out without regards to the surroundings.

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I wonder just how much time had passed, but it shouldn't have taken that long for me to have lost consciousness. I remember myself bawling on top of the lawn, but by the time I noticed it, I was on a bed.

Bandages were wrapped around my body, and it appeared that I had received some treatment.

"Just who… Father? No, that wouldn't happen."

I'm not sure if I should be saying this, but father would never save me. There's the attitude he had when he left me, but more importantly, this place wasn't inside the manor.

I looked up at the wood grains on the ceiling, and understood this wasn't the inside of my own home.

I wonder who saved me. It hurt to move, so I turned just my head to look over the surroundings.

I was in a wooden house, no, more like a hut. My eyes turned back to the ceiling. I had woken up, but my body still felt like it needed some sleep.

Also, I don't want to think of anything right now.

(So I was abandoned…)

Having been abandoned by my family, Celes's face floated into my mind. Her vulgar smile as she ridiculed me.

At that time…

"…? Who is it?"

Around me, the sound of someone speaking… no more like the feeling that someone was making a speech. I was assaulted by a strange sensation.

"There's no one, right?"

I feel no presences around me. Thinking that I was mistaken, I closed my eyes.

I don't know by whom, but I had been treated. I'll sleep for a bit, and recover my stamina. My body felt heavy, and I wanted to close my eyes.

(Right now, I don't want to think about anything…)

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It probably happened a little after I had closed my eyes. I heard a voice.

『Oy, oy, that means it came, right? It definitely came!』

Rather than cheerful, the voice sounded violent. It was loud, and it laughed hardily.

(W-who? Could it be the person that saved me?)

It didn't looked like my voice reached him. What's more, for some reason, I feel quite tired. It's as if my Mana was being sucked out…

『Father, please shut up for a bit.』

This time, it was a worn out voice of a young man.

(There are multiple people? Even so, what's with this uneasy feeling…)

I can't let out my voice. My thoughts aren't getting through to them.

『Try understanding what grandpa's trying to say, dad. I mean, it's our first conversation. And I can feel that a direct descendant is nearby. He definitely carries our blood.』

This time, it really was a cheery voice.

(Three? No, there may be more.)

More than a voice, perhaps a presence. I couldn't think that there were only three.

『I get what grandpa's saying~. First, let's calm down and confirm it.』

I heard a new one. Since he said grandpa, was it a family? But all of their voices sounded young, or at the very least, they don't seem aged.

『Well, it's our first conversation, you see. But, you know, there are things we wont notice at this rate, I think, you see.』

(Again. With this, is that the fifth voice?)

Another one rang out.

『You're too pessimistic, pops. More importantly, I want to know what became of him. It would be nice if he noticed, but… what's up, Brod?』

The name Brod came out, shocking me.

I mean, Brod was the name of my own grandfather.

(This is… this might mean that I'm dead.)

Are you alright with that? My inner thoughts screamed, as I strained to hear the voices.

『It's my grandson! It's Lyle! There's no doubt it's my grandson!』

It was so reminiscent of my grandfather's voice, it made me want to give a bitter smile. He was one who was a tad bit too soft on his grandson, but even those emotions could be felt through his voice.

Still, he sounded a little younger. It didn't have the hoarse tones of an older man.

Just what was the meaning of this? I thought, as silence spread for a while.

『『『For real!?』』』

What a noisy bunch. All their voices seemed shocked.

(……Just what sort of situation am I in?)

On that day, my fate began to turn.

Chapter 01 - Former Noble Lyle

The me in the mirror had my blue hair hanging down.

The me in the mirror had a severely worn-out face. There were some places on the bandages that were soaked in blood, but the wounds had already closed.

Perhaps the burnt parts had been treated with special medicine, but they had faded.

“How does it look, young master?”

As I turn around to the voice that called out to me, I offer my thanks to the old man.

“Thank you, it’s much better now.”

The old man was the one who lived in a hut on the side of the courtyard, the gardener. It seems he has family, but after his wife died, he started living alone inside of the hut.

On the wide grounds of the estate, the hut that was tucked away in quite a hidden place was apparently a repurposed baggage shed.

“That’s good. You were in quite a dangerous spot there. If I was the estate’s doctor, I would beable to treat you a little more gently, but…”

This apologetic old man was, despite his demeanor, a former soldier. Perhaps he had some knowledge on treating injuries, but he had healed me up quite skillfully.

Anyways, more than the man’s knowledge on treatment, my most pressing matter was…

“… I’ve been completely abandoned by my parents. Hahaha, I can’t do anything but laugh about it.”

Looking at me raise a soulless laugh, the man…【 Zell】 lowered himself into the chair in the room. Being over seventy, he lived by maintaining a portion of the vast yard.

There are several gardeners in service to the house, but the only one who lived isolated in a hut was Zell. I had heard my parents talking amongst themselves about having trouble trying to get the man who served from my grandfather's generation to vacate the place.

He had carried my wounded body here, and had nursed me over the three days I had spent sleeping.

I sit on the bed, and give my thanks once more.

"Thank you for saving me, Zell. Although I don't have anything to give you in return."

Seeing me return a joke, Zell let out a deep sigh.

"I'm relieved you look fine. But the state of this manor really has been strange lately."

The reason Zell let out a sigh was due to how the state of affairs of the mansion had completely changed over the past five years.

I occasionally thought it strange as well, but even so, there are some things you can't understand if you're always in the midst of them.

"There's this time's case with the young master, but making the young miss the heir… If we asked the previous generation, I wonder just what he would say in his rage."

My grandfather, 【Brod Walt】, was a strict noble. He held the court rank of Count, and governed land as a provincial noble.

That means he also held an army.

The Walt House is one that serves as an advisor to royalty. In grandfather's time, he was often called to the imperial capital to speak with his majesty, the king. Father often bragged to me about it.

But he was also an exceedingly rigid person.

He was strong in battle, and one who poured his effort into his territory's internal affairs.

The next generation's king also considered him a leading noble of Bahnseim. He was just a little to soft on his grandchildren.

His first grandson, me, was quite spoiled by the man.

"I only have a kind impression of him, though. It's just that I don't know how I'd face him now that I'm not succeeding the house."

I had betrayed the expectations he placed on me. Thinking that, I felt all my diligence up until now to have been in vain.
Now, I've already lost everything.

"Yound master… don't corner yourself too much. You're still young. Please live the rest of your life facing forwards."

"Thanks, but I have no goal. Up until now, I've only ever aimed to become a good lord. Now that that's gone, I've no idea where to go. I'm deplorable, right?"

As I smiled in self-derision, Zell stood up, and proceeded to the kitchen to prepare something to drink. I covered my face, and began thinking of what to do from here on.

"I can't stay here anymore. I'll have to find somewhere to go."

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From the time I started being taken care of in Zells house, I was able to take off the bandages by the fifth day.

I wonder if he had used some expensive medicine, but my recovery was fast.

But being taken care of by him for so long leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Also, I was driven out of this estate.

I may bring trouble to the man who's sheltering me.

And during our evening meal, I brought it up as Zell was conversing with me. What he was describing was a scene where my grandfather raced across the battlefield, and about his actions in the imperial capital.

I remembered the stories he told on our third day's dinner as I spoke.

"Zell, I'm thinking of becoming an adventurer."

"An adventurer, you say? It's true that some noble who don't succeed households go of to become adventurers, but you have both magic and knowledge. With that skillset, government work is always possible."

I shake my head from side to side.

I may bring trouble to whatever service I'm employed in. The Walt House is a large one, and it has influence befitting of that.

If it's just at the level of threatening my employers, then that Celes would probably do it easily.

"I've lost everything. I just thought I would get something from scratch with my own hands."

"… I… see. If that's the young master's desired path, then so be it."

"According to your stories, famous adventurers aren't troubled by money, right? I'll definitely repay this debt someday. At that time, I'll come back a splendid adventurer."

"Hahaha, I'll be waiting for it, young master."

Zell laughed in a loud voice.

I wonder if he's just going along with my joke. Naturally, in the depths of my mind, I truly didn't think that the occupation of an adventurer was something that easy.

Even if I look like this, I was raised to inherit a ruling position.

As a Feudal Lord, I knew painfully well just what the existences called adventurers were. They challenged the unknown, and returned from labyrinths with great treasures.

If you asked, kids would probably call them their aspirations, but in reality, they were just a gathering of ruffians.

If you wanted to call them mercenaries, it would be more than fitting. Those mercenaries could calmly assault villages to plunder their food stock.

Besides the part where they deal with monsters, adventurers were nothing but a troublesome existence.

However, it's not like all of them were villains.

Famous adventurers could work with the government on favorable terms. For those that run mercenary brigades on the side, they could be hired for large sums of money based on their skill.

"But an adventurer, is it? It sounds like the free city of【Beim】would be a good place to set up shop."

I gave an honest inquiry at Zell's words.

"Beim? I believe it was a lord-less city run by a system of merchants, correct? It's a trade point between numerous territories."

"That's exactly why. It isn't managed by a country, and it's an easy land to thrive in for adventurers. Or course, that can also be said for criminals."

There are plenty of adventurers who turn into criminals. When that

happens, they get banishment notices from the adventurers' guild, and become wanted men.

But once they fled to the trade point of Beim, no country could openly try to hunt them down. I had heard stories of it, but I'm a bit hesitant to aim to settle in such a land.

It appears Zell sensed my sentiment.

"I don't think you need to pay too much mind to it. As long as you don't venture into places where those sorts gather, you'll rarely get tangled up in their affairs."

"I-I see. I thought the imperial capital would be a good start in and of itself, though…"

Even on the Walt House's territory, there's an adventurers' guild. But my father, the feudal lord, could interfere with that one, so I must avoid it at all costs.

If I wanted to stay within the country, I would have to pick a place without father's influence. If you think about it like that, the capital was the natural choice.

"Among the high ranking nobles of the capital, there are plenty of houses that are involved with our own. It isn't a bad option, but I can't say it's the best for you."

"I see. But I don't have the travel expenses to reach Beim. Also, I also want to see just how far my current skill level will reach."

Heim was the city of merchants. At the same time, there are plenty of adventurers there seeking employment. To summarize, if you aren't capable enough, you won't be able to survive.

"Truly. Then perhaps stopping by the capital first may be your best bet. I won't recommend staying for long, though."

"Where is there besides the imperial capital?"

As I had the opportunity, I enquired further. Having run around the battlefield alongside my grandfather, I thought Zell would know of various lands.

I had never conversed with him before, but when I tried it, he was an old man who told interesting stories.

“How about the city of【Dalien】 near the capital? It’s not a hard place to live.”

“Dalien? I’ve only ever heard the name.”

“As a territory, their development is behind ours. In that regard, it may be easier to find work there.”

“Work? You don’t mean monster extermination?”

As I said that, the corner of his eyes sharpened as he seemed mildly amazed.

“Well, it seems you don’t often hear of how society works over here, young master. There’s no helping it, so let me explain.”

Zell began explaining just what it was that adventurers were. According to my mental image, they mainly dived into labyrinths, and occasionally fought on the battlefield as hired swords.

But according to him…

“Adventurers are ones who can accomplish any sort of job. At the start, they did carry out monster extermination, and challenging labyrinths, but it turns out there were a lot of odd jobs to be had. Most youngsters there take on misc tasks to earn up money to purchase the necessary equipment.”

“I-is that so? But there must be people who specialize in the odd jobs too, right?”

“Things like that are managed by the guild taking applications, and paying for services by the day. Well, it’s just like an employment service. Like that, the guild looks out for the citizens around it. Of course, you

could just call it earning through physical labor."

Zell described the face of adventurers I didn't want to hear about. As I thought, there's no guarantee that everything will work out smoothly.

"But by doing those menial jobs, adventurers prepare their equipment. It's not always a bad thing, so finding fault in it would be more troublesome to the adventurers themselves than the guild."

"Is that how these things work? I'm none too knowledgeable."

To me, who was raised with the sole purpose of ruling, there's no doubt it's a world I can't even imagine. For some reason, Zell seemed just a little bit happy.

"What is it?"

"Nothing. Well, I've been serving since the time of the previous generation, but I never thought I would get to talk with the young master like this. It's because the current head had been born into a Count's family."

During my grandfather's reign, the Walt House finally reached counthood.

The generation before him was badmouthed quite a bit for expending a lot of money to buy vast expanses of land, it seems. Even now, my father speaks of it with regret.

Father's grandfather- my great grandfather- was apparently a person who resorted to quite some underhanded methods.

From a start like that, Father was raised up as the head of a Count's house. My grandfather had started out as a viscount, but he still led an army, and had fighting experience.

I guess Father never had any contact with Zell.

"… By the way, young master, have you experienced anything strange while in my house?"

“Something strange? No… ah!”

I was about to answer ‘Nothing’ to his question. Compared to being driven out of my own house, I feel that everything else generally didn’t mean anything.

But there, I remembered.

“An abyss of death? I think I heard my grandfather’s voice. A nostalgic tone… but there were other voices as well. I may have just been dreaming, though.”

Saying it was just a dream, I started to eat again.

With his eyes wide open, Zell continued to look at me.

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The next morning.

I put on the clothes I borrowed from Zell, and wore a cloak over that.

“It’s clothing that my son left behind, but the build should fit well enough.”

“I’m truly sorry for all of this. I’ll definitely repay this debt.”

I said an apology, but Zell shook his head.

“No, you’ve done more than enough. Also, young master, take this.”

Saying that, he handed over a leather bag. In the bag that could fit in the palm of my hand, I found some coins.

“No, taking money from you is a bit…”

To me, it looked like a small sum, but it was probably different to Zell. I understand that our sense of money is completely different, so I refused to take it. However, Zell pushed it at me.

"You'll definitely find it necessary. What do you plan to do without a penny on you? Also, if you plan to return it at some point, just think of it as an investment."

Having been told that, I said my thanks, and accepted it.

"S-sorry. Really, about everything."

"It's fine. With this, I've finally been able to fulfill my promise to the previous head."

"Promise?"

As I tilted my head, Zell presented a small wooden box to me, and opened it up. In it was a blue gem.

Silver decorations were applied all around it, and at a glance, I could tell that expensive craftsmanship had been put into it.

"No, there's no way I could take something this…"

"This was the previous head's, no… an gem that's been passed down through each generation of the Walt House. It was crafted with an extremely scarce metal, and forged by a renowned blacksmith. A famous artisan applied the finishing touches."

I looked at the gem that was about two centimeters across. It had been fastened to a necklace.

"My grandfathers? I do remember him having something like that, but shouldn't my father have received it?"

"The previous head tried adding more ornaments onto it to make it more fitting of a count's house, but his passing came at a bad time… When the gem was to be embedded into it, I departed to confirm it, and from

there, I took it back. However, I wasn't able to get an audience with Maizel-sama."

Father is also busy.

Because of that, unless it's an extremely urgent matter, even one who serves in the house may be unable to meet him. Even more so that it was the source of some of his worries, Zell.

From the wooden box, I took the gem and chain.

The gem… an item that's manufacturing process had been lost in the passage of years was one that held a memory of an individual's skill. The specific details were lost when the world changed over to simple Magic Tools, and forgotten.

The Number of Skills that can manifest in an individual was always one. While they could hone that skill over their lives, it was impossible to increase their numbers.

The gem held a memory of such a skill, and made it so that others could use it.

"And I doubt I'll be able to ever give this to the current head, Maizel-sama. This may be my selfish decision, but please take it, young master… Lyle-sama. That way, I'll be able to repay my debt to the late Count."

I hung it around my own neck, and gripped the gem.

"… I'm truly thankful, Zell. I'll definitely come back some day to repay you."

"I'll be waiting, Lyle-sama."

Saying that, I departed from Zell's hut.

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In the past six days, Zell felt the room he always thought was small had suddenly gotten wider.

In the past, the house he lived in with his family was also the place the previous family head Brod would stop by to hide out and have a drink.

Looking of the picture that had gotten sketched in town of his wife, he whispered.

“Hey, honey. With this, it feels something’s been lifted from my shoulders.”

He lied down on the bed, and pulled over the blankets as he closed his eyes.

“But for him to have the same preferences as Brod-sama… that man also liked that stewed meat.”

What Zell remembered was the time when his house was still lively.

And he remembered how he handed off Brod’s gem that had been passed down in his family for generations. Brod was even older than him, and in the end, he was bedridden.

The weakened form of the man whose dignity was Zell’s aspiration brought tears to his eyes.

“Even if he knew he wasn’t going to be around when the finishing touches were put on it, why did he leave it to me… but now, I’ve fulfilled my duty, Brod-sama.”

The memories of when he was young, and running alongside the man on the battlefield revived within him.

“But it truly is a blessing that I was finally able to give it to Lyle-sama in the end… Honey, I’ll be off to you soon.”

After a single deep breath, a peaceful smile broke out on the old man.

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Having left the mansion and arrived at the city that was built around it, I talked with a peddler along the walls that surrounded it.

Noon had passed, and if I was able to hitch a ride on a travelling cart, I would be able to get to another town to rest.

“To a rest town? That’s fine by me, but we’ll be arriving at night, and there’s no telling if there’ll be rooms open, you know. I have some connections to get me a place, but this time of year’s going to be quite crowded.”

The peddler indicates his disapproval, but to me, this was a land I wanted to depart from as soon as possible.

“That doesn’t matter to me. Can you give me a ride?”

“I don’t care either way, but can you fight? If you can’t then since you’re going to be using my cart, I’m going to be charging.”

On the merchant’s question, I created some flame in the palm of my hand.

I had lost my sabre, but I can still use magic. With this, I’ve proven I’m at least strong enough to fend for myself.

“How surprising. If you’re a magician, does that make you a noble? No, looking at your attire… Oh my, that’s an unnecessary inquisition on my part. Understood. If you’re going to put my cart as a priority, and guard it carefully, I won’t charge a fee. No, more so, based on what happened, I may even end up paying out.”

The middle-aged man displayed the palm of his hand, indicating his acceptance of me riding along.

“Thank you. It’s about after the rest town, but…”

There, a voice rose up to break me and the peddler’s conversation.

As I turned around, I saw an individual I knew relatively well standing there.

“U—um, please take me as well!”

A girl with her side ponytail as her defining characteristic.

“… Novem.”

The girl hanging her head in embarrassment’s name was【Novem Forxuz】

(TL: I, in all honesty, don’t know how to romanize フォクスズ to make it actually look plausible.)

A girl of a Baron’s family.

Also, I’ll tack a ‘former’ onto it, but she was the girl who was once my fiancee.

Chapter 02 - Former Fiancée Novem

I turn my eyes to the girl sitting across from me on the cart.

As I glanced at her, I saw her look at me too. Our eyes met, and both of us turned away.

“Hahaha, ah, such innocence.”

The middle aged peddler laughed as he looked over at us.

Her name was【Novem Forxuz】.

Her hair was done in a side ponytail, and it suited her long light-brown hair quite well. I’ll bet there’s some provisions for travel inside of her leather, rectangular bag.

Perhaps she chose something easy to move in, but she wasn’t in a dress, as I usually saw her.

She was wearing thick-soled boots, and she looks like a taller older sister of her usual self. Her reserved expression showed signs of tension for the first time today.

I ask in a voice low enough so that the peddler wouldn’t be able to make it out.

“How did you know? Also, trying to follow me; are you sane?”

“… Am I a bother?”

The girl giving a troubled expression was from a Baron’s house.

Naturally, with me being of Count Status, the arranged marriage wouldn’t work out status-wise. But the Forxuz House was one that had served the Walt House for many generations.

The marriage for the girl that held that title, when proposed to my

parents, was accepted when I was thirteen because it was a pain for them to deal with.

Ordinarily, it's the house of higher status that brings up such talks, or at the very least, they study the house that proposed it.

"Wrong. I was kicked out, you know. Following someone like me is something only a fool would do."

Following someone who lost everything will be of no profit to either her, or the Forxuz House.

For a proper noble, the best interest of one's house should be one's priority. There are those who aren't normal like that, but those ones are the minority.

And I couldn't think of Novem as one of that minority.

Since our ages were close, we often saw one another.

I also have some memories of us playing together.

But from the point where my parents started neglecting me, I don't remember us ever talking much. It's because to earn my parents' praise, I desperately immersed myself in nothing but training and studies.

"Yes, it is a bother. And here I thought I would be living a lone and free lifestyle from here on."

If I say something harsh to her, she may turn back. Thinking that, I voiced something that wasn't on my mind.

Novem was never a romantic dreaming girl, and even if you compare her to the Walt Family's precepts, she was definitely a passing bridal candidate.

"… I deeply apologize. But I have decided to marry Lyle-sama."

To the girl giving a smile, I delivered some crucial information.

“I have no such will. I’ll become an adventurer, and live a willful life being waited on by women. Being driven away by my family actually makes me feel relieved.”

The worst sermon. With this, Novem should be tired of me.

As I thought that, I looked down. I didn’t want to see Novem’s scornful face, but as I decided that wouldn’t advance the conversation, I looked up at her again.

“Don’t worry, it’s something I arbitrarily decided for myself. Even if we don’t marry, please allow me to serve by your side.”

I put my face in my hands.

“What about House Forxus? You’ll make your parents sad.”

As I brought up her own home, Novem offered a response full of self-confidence.

“Don’t worry about that part. I’m the second daughter, and my brother is the one succeeding the house. I even have an elder and younger sister, so my parents sent me off saying that it would somehow work out if I alone was freed of obligations.”

(The hell’s wrong with you, Mother and Father Forxuz!?)

My head was starting to hurt.

Even if you call her a side-liner, Novem’s still got decent looks. To add onto that, she was strictly disciplined, and quite refined. Even if she doesn’t say anything, I’ll bet there were marriage proposals to her.

It’s possible she could have even gotten married off to a Viscount’s family.

Having finally gotten the happiness she wanted, it’s a waste if she were to render it futile for my sake.

Simply because I had known her from my childhood, I wanted her to

be happy. But the individual's own will was quite rigid.

(Come to think of it, she had those stubborn parts back when she was small too.)

"… Just do whatever you want."

AS I turned my face away, Novem put her hand to her mouth, and smiled.

"Then I'll do just that."

As if he had heard our voices, the merchant spoke up.

"It sure is nice to be young. That alone is a fortune, you know."

It sounds like he heard all that quite clearly.

My face turns red from embarrassment. But at that time, I heard a voice.

『Oy, oy, you're quite loved, ain't 'ya, kid.』

I heard a voice with a teasing tone. I looked around.

On top of the cart, there was only me and Novem. The Peddler was holding the reigns upfront. Around our wagon, there were similar travelers and merchants out searching for work, but they weren't at a distance where a voice would reach.

"Novem, did you hear anything? A voice that seemed to be trying to tease?"

On my question, she shook her head.

"I-I apologize… I didn't hear it."

As she apologetically lowers her head to me, I tell her not to mind it, as I survey the area once more.

The voice sounded male, and it was quite a firm one at that. But while I can see some males here and there, there's not at a distance where it would be that clear.

What's more, I had the impression that the voice had come from somewhere much closer.

(A hallucination? Am I still tired? … Come to think of it, I've ben finding it hard to get over fatigue lately. Is it because my wounds aren't fully recovered?)

I recall that it seemed vaguely familiar as I look up. As I traced the roof of cloth the peddler had put up with my eyes, I shut them.

As long as I'm the only one who heard it, then it may just be that I've been mentally pressed.

"Are you alright, Lyle-sama?"

As Novem sounded worried, I opened my mouth. As I was about to tell her I was fine, I heard another voice from close-by.

I could hear it quite crisply, but Novem didn't appear bothered by it.

『For him to have someone like that at his age… I can't be anything but jealous.』
『You sure went through a lot, father.』

From a sitting position, I raised myself, and looked around. Novem looked shocked.

"What's wrong, Lyle-sama!?"

But the surroundings hadn't changed in the slightest.

"… It's nothing."

As I said that, I thought.

"Hmm? Am I really that tired? … I guess I'll sleep for now."

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After arriving at the rest town, we consulted with the peddler, and got him to agree to let us accompany him tomorrow as well.

Perhaps it was a seasonal occurrence, but the town was quite lively.

After confirming the peddler's departure time, me and Novem went off inn-hunting.

But there, a problem emerged.

"There's only one room? Two are impossible?"

After the inn's owner confirmed the fact, he immediately told us it was impossible.

"There are too many people this time of year, so we can't be putting a single person to a room. I'm sorry, but if you're acquaintances, can you both put up with sharing a room?"

I turn to Novem.

She had chosen to follow me, but being in the same lodging as her was something I wanted to avoid.

As I was taught as such, I was bewildered on how to deal with the man.

But Novem simply told him it didn't matter either way, and paid for it. She handed him some copper coins in exchange for the key.

"O-oy…"

Before I could ask her if that was alright, the inn's owner spoke.

“The room is on the far side of the second floor. The room number is on the paper attached to the key. Oh, right, breakfast and hot water’s free, but we don’t do dinners, so you should probably find somewhere to eat before you leave your luggage.”

I didn’t understand what he meant by ‘before you leave your luggage.’

(If there’s a key, then wouldn’t it be better to just leave it? I’m a separate matter, but Novem’s carrying a travelling bag.)

She was carrying some heavy baggage, but I thanked the owner anyways.

“Thank you. What should we do about the key?”

“You’ve already paid me, and I’m not going to play oblivious about it later. I’ll hold onto it, so take this note with you. If you give it to whoever’s here, they’ll hand over the key.”

I had some questions as to why we needed to carry out this exchange, but Novem dragged me out.

We exited the inn, and got to looking for food at a nearby place that I couldn’t whether it was a bar or restaurant.

There were many people on the roads, and it really was a noisy town…

『… Wait a second, isn’t this kid really too wet behind the ears? He’s way too oblivious to how this world works.』
『It’s because he’s a Count! It’s because Lyle’s going to be a Count in the future!』
『Well, it’s true that he’s been rich from the moment he was born. He’s a tried and true pampered brat.』

Within the clamor of the crown, I heard a clear voice again. It definitely sounded close, and my name was even brought up.

“Are you alright, Lyle-sama? Your complexion is a little pale.”

“I-I’m fine!”

My impatient voice came out quite loud. It sounds like Novem didn’t hear anything. The voices started coming again.

『And wait a god damn moment… go take the girl’s bag’s already. You’re pretty much empty-handed, kid. You truly are inconsiderate.』
『Count, was it? I guess the child of something like that turns out like this. He’s on the side that’s used to getting taken care of.』
“… What did you say?”

I heard it again. And it’s coming from really close to me. What’s more, each and every voice is different. There are multiple of them.

“Lyle-sama?”

In order to not trouble Novem, who looked worried, I opted to ignore them. But it really is wrong for the girl to be carrying along a heavy bag while I don’t have anything.

“Y-yeah… Novem, isn’t that heavy? I’ll carry it.”

Saying that, I took her bag. While she insisted that she would carry it, I took it slightly forcefully as we entered the restaurant.

But then they came again.

『He should’ve taken her hand, and escorted her.』

When we entered the place, I heard a voice like that. An image of me offering my hand to her flashed across my mind for an instant.

(No, wait, we’re already in the store… giving her my hand now holds no meaning.)

As I was lost in thought with my hand extended, I was left in a flustered state in front of her.

As if she sensed that, Novem took my hand.

“Lyle-sama, that seat looks open, so can I trust you to guide me there?”

“Ah, eh… y-yeah.”

As I escorted her the short distance, Novem offered a final thanks.

“Much appreciated, Lyle-sama. Um… ah, excuse me.”

Saying that, Novem went and called over the waiter to order without hesitation. She asked what was recommended from the menu, and ordered two portions.

She pointed to some things, and asked whether they were fine with me, and I merely affirmed without any idea of what I was going to be served. There, I heard the voices again.

『Hey, isn’t this guy a bit of a wimp?』
『It’s because he’s oblivious about the world. Well, he does have some unreliable spots too.』
『Here, it’s fine because the girl’s being considerate, but a normal one’d dump him, right?』

As my evaluation was steadily dropping, I thought to myself.

(Just what is it with this situation!?)

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Night.

After returning to the inn, I accepted the hot water the owner had prepared for us.

Apparently, I was to wipe my body with the hot water in the bucket.

“There’s no bath?”

Novem answered my question.

“Even in this rest town, there are some places that offer it based on price, but it’s standard to simply wipe down your body with hot water. Even in inns with baths, there are few with public ones for guests to use freely.”

“Really? I heard in town that there were some private rooms with baths, though…”

Novem had a troubled face as she dipped the towel in the bucket, and wrung it out. She had me take off my clothes, and started wiping me down.

“Inns that have private baths are ridiculously expensive. They’re at a level where they charge silver coins per night.”

“I have some silver, though. Novem, are you sure you’re alright without a bath?”

As I said that, she cautioned me.

“That’s no good, Lyle-sama! From now on, money is going to be scarce. If you don’t economize when you have the chance, it’ll run out before you know it.”

“R-really?”

As she scolded me, she finished washing my back, and moved to my hair. After lifting the bucket over my head, Novem gently poured it over me.

I heard a fed-up voice.

『Oy, spoiled brat, when your body’s clean, leave the room at once.』

“Eh?”

“What’s wrong, Lyle-sama?”

I heard a threatening voice, so I started looking around at once. As my hair was wet, water flew around.

『It’s no good, this kid… he doesn’t notice it at all.』
『I don’t think there’s too much of a problem, though.』

I reassured a worried Novem that nothing was wrongas I waited for my hair to be washed, and put on my clothes after.

I wanted to change them, but I was unable to replace anything but my undergarments.

“Then I’ll be using it next, alright? Umm…”

She seemed to want to say something.

“Y-yeah. I’ll be leaving then. I’m just outside the door if you need me (Why do I have to get out?)”

“I deeply apologize.”

Saying that, I left the room, and found a chair in the corridor. As I sat on the creaking wood, I didn’t hear anyone talking to me.

“Is it really a hallucination? And wait, today’s already…”

As I was sitting, my eyelids began to feel heavy. Like that, I closed my eyes. Perhaps because my body had been cleaned, I felt relieved.

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『Wake up, ‘ya bastard!』

I heard an angry voice, and when I opened my eyes, I was in a

different place than before.

“Eh, w… what?”

What’s more, there were people around me. A large, circular table extended before me, and seven other individuals were seated around it…

Each of them held a different shape, and they were all faces I had some recollection of. Where did I see them? As I thought that, I noticed a man wearing beast skins as a vest.

His arms were thick like a log, and his hair was unkempt. Around him were men that seemed to be of better upbringing. All of them ranged from their late twenties to early thirties in appearance.

I turned my attention to the savage tribesman-like man before me.

“Hmm? Could it be that voice was…”

『That’s right, that was us.』

Among them, there was a man I had a clear recollection of. Unlike in my memory, he was quite young. However, his atmosphere hadn’t changed.

『Lyle!』

“Eh? G-grandfather!”

There, was the youthened form of my grandfather. His spine was straighter, and his body was much more firm than I remembered.

『You’ve grown this big… I’m happy for you, Lyle.』

His atmosphere was still that of a welcoming grandparent. The other individuals lined up seemed resentful, or uninterested, or just fed up.

As they looked at me, it seems they each had their own evaluations.

My grandfather spoke up.

『Do you guys have any complaints to voice against my grandson!?』

The one to return an answer was the savage-styled man.

『Of course I do! What's with this frail pansy!? There's no way in hell my bloodline would produce a man as wimpy as this!』

"B-bloodline!?"

I couldn't grasp the situation. And since my grandfather's here, couldn't this be a dream? As I thought that, a different one let out their voice.

『No, isn't it fine like this? And wait, More importantly, there's something I'd like to ask. Um~ Lyle, was it? I'm your great grandfather.』

"… Eh?"

The red haired, and slightly wild-looking man had a tidy appearance. But his clothing was slightly worn down.

I remembered the portraits inside my own home. Those picture of each preceding generation of family heads were stuck up around the manor. A few of them gave off quite a different impression, but most of them were reminiscent of them.

The irritated savage spoke up.

『You sure are slow on the uptake! Li~sten~ here~. We're yo' goddamn ancestors!』

Sitting next to him, a man in hunter-esque clothing softly mumbled.

『You may not want to accept it, but this one's the provincial nobleman, the founder of the Walt House. Ah, you don't really have to respect him or anything.』

"… Wha?"

I’ll bet that I’m currently making a quite a pathetic face right now.

Chapter 03 - Monster

I was severely tired, but after waking up, I endured the sleepy feeling and ate breakfast.

The food served by the inn was something I wouldn't call tasty even if I was trying to flatter, but perhaps because it was warm and my body was craving something to eat, I felt it was delicious.

Looking at my figure, Novem seemed relieved.

"You looked terribly tired yesterday, but it looks like you're fine today. Your complexion isn't bad anymore."

After waking up, I was completely in Novem's care.

She washed my face, brushed my teeth, and even set my hair. I get the feeling I heard the First Generation crying out multiple times, but most of them were shouts for me to stop relying on her.

(TL: Brushing teeth… why does that sound lewd to me…)

For some reason, he was quite conscious of Novem.

It wasn't just the First.

All those prior to the Fourth Generation… First, Second, Third, and Fourth, were all somewhat soft on her.

Fifth and onwards recognized her family as a vassal one, and didn't say anything as she took care of me.

"It seems I can't shake off this fatigue, but I'm better than yesterday. We'll be moving all throughout today, so let's finish with shopping and wait for the wagon at the gates."

"That's right. We have a flask already, so we'll have to buy preserved foods and other expendable items."

Novem had some preparations, but I barely had any luggage. The peddler told me even if I was trying to travel, I was way too lightly equipped.

“Let’s buy our consumables here and choose some weaponry in the next town.”

I was completely unarmed.

There were machetes in Zell’s place, but no knives. Walking around with one of those was a bit off, so I planned to buy a weapon somewhere.

“Do you think they’ll have a Sabre?”

Novem makes a bit of a complicated expression. She was probably remembering the Sabre I used to use.

“As long as it’s a sharp blade, they’ll probably stock it. It’s just that, concerning weapon quality, I’m not really all that…”

She gave an apologetic look, but in the past, she used to study Holy Attribute Magic. Unlike me, she earnestly pursued just the path of a mage, so she could use complicated Holy spells.

Naturally, she could use other magics as well.

“You didn’t bring a staff? The one you used to carry around was a magic tool, right?”

Magic Tools were weapons with Skills sealed into them. As people were only able to hold a single skill individually, they were needed in order to use multiple ones.

Right now, rather than Gems, these were the popular trend.

“I deeply apologize. I left that one with the Forxuz House. It was something that could be called an heirloom, and it would be uncouth for me to make off with it for my personal matters. But even like this, I may not be up to Lyle-sama’s level, but I have studied magic. I’ll show you how useful

I am.”

“I-I see.”

The five elements, and two divine.

Those were the basis of Magic.

On top of the five great elements of nature, 【Fire】, 【Water】, 【Earth】, 【Wind】, and 【Lightning】, the two attributes called the two divine, 【Holy】 and 【Dark】, also existed.

As long as one was a noble, it was’nt rare for one to be a magician capable of using those elements. Those who broke off from the upper echelon of society were often magicians as well, and apart from that… especially among houses of knight status, there were nobles who were unable to use magic.

Favored elements differed by the person, but even so, it was standard for any magician to be able to manipulate them all to some extent.

It was just that Novem advanced her studies through specialization on a single point.

『How diligent… what a nice girl.』

I heard the First Generation’s voice. After learning that Novem was of the Forxuz House that looked after him, he blatantly started favoring her.

Based on the conversations of my ancestors, the Walt House was in a debt of gratitude to the Forxuz House that was well over repayable, it seems.

But perhaps because of the flow of time, the Walts started treating the Forxuzes as vassals. Apparently, the first few generations were unable to excuse that fact.

Perhaps the Second and Fourth generations were especially looked after, as they both kept telling me to treat Novem with care. They were quite loud.

『Lyle, try a little harder on your own, why don't you? You're relying on Novem-chan too much.』

The Second Generation said as such, but I have no idea what I'm supposed to do about that.

(And wait, since they took good care of my ancestors, I'm not the only one who relied on them, right…)

I couldn't break into an argument with them in front of Novem's eyes, so I ignored them and continued my own conversation.

"Today, we'll stop by a nearby village, and after that, we'll arrive at our destination city. Henceforth, we'll exit the territory's border on foot, I guess."

On my opinion, Novem voiced some disapproval.

"That sounds fine, but I think it would be best if we departed alongside the main body of merchants. If it was us alone, we'll stand out too much, and we'll make for an easy target."

It seems my opinion was really that bad, as the First Generation stuck his voice in.

『Why don't you understand something so basic!? This boy's been raised much too sheltered. The Walt House's selling point is the wildness of its men!』

The Second Generation countered him.

『Quit your nagging! You're not wild, or anything; you're just an idiot!』
『You bastard! What sort of things ya' sayin' to yer old man! Let's take this outside!』
『We can't leave this place, dumbass!』
(T-they're loud…)

Before we departed, I went around the rest town to buy the supplies

we would need to travel.

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We stopped by another town on the way, stayed a night, and finally reached our destination point the next day.

It was the town on the edge of the Walt House's territory's border, as well as an important relay point with other territories. For that sake, considering defense, it was built in close proximity to a fortress.

The number of soldiers in it was also greater than in the other towns.

Evening had fallen when we reached it, and the peddler offered his thanks to us.

It was because in the town we stopped at on the way, we assisted with his work. It was mainly Novem who skillfully assisted him.

I, just a little… and wait, I was mostly just watching the whole time.

"Thank you for helping me back in town. We didn't meet any monsters, but please think of this as your wages."

Saying that, he handed over some copper coins.

"Thank you."

I was the one who received it, but the one who reciprocated his thanks was Novem.

"You've sure nabbed yourself a tasteful lady there, young man. I'm envious of you."

"Y-yeah…"

As I let out a vague response, the Fourth Generation raised his voice

『Yo man, that's where you say something to raise Novem-chan's affection level! At least say, she's too good of a woman for me, or something!』

But there, the Fifth whispered.

『You had quite a time getting mom, so it's just that you won't be able to calm down if he doesn't have to say something like that, right? Good grief…』
(What's with this people. And wait, are these guys really supposed to be my ancestors?)

It wasn't that I didn't want to admit it, but still, I wanted to voice a complaint or two.

"If you're setting Dalien as your end destination, then you guys should hitch a ride from a large city to the Imperial Capital. If you get that far, you'll have some peace of mind, but please be careful. The Walt House does a reliable job on subjugating monsters, but other provinces have numerous dangerous spots."

We expressed our gratitude at the peddler's explanation and parted. Afterwards, Novem and I went out to search for an inn.

There wasn't any leisure to do any shopping today, so I planned to spend two or three nights at the inn to get our preparations together.

It seems that, through the addition of my own skill, the space in the gem was overflowing. According to the Third Generation, after taking in eight skills, the gem evolved into a 【Jewel】.

(TL: Jewel is written as treasure gem)

Until now, it was only a device that allowed one to use skills, but like this, the ability to talk to the gem's users of the past–my ancestors–emerged, apparently.

(From my point of view, that part's just a pain, though…)

But the Jewel wasn't complete. My conversations with the ancestors and the use of skills naturally needed some sort of fuel.

For that, it began to use my magic.

(The reason my fatigue won't wear away lately is because I'm on a journey I'm not used to, and because of the Jewel.)

Meaning the reason I get tired so easily is because the ancestors keep flapping their mouths and draining my energy. If you pile up garbage, it may become a mountain.

(TL: A proverb meaning the little things add up)

"Lyle-sama, how does this place look? Both the price and facilities are relatively good."

Novem had picked out an inn, so I decided to obey her choice. And wait, I have no idea how to compare them in the first place. All of them look the same to me.

"It would be nice if there was a bath."

"I'm sorry. This one is also the type where you borrow water in a bucket."

As Novem gave an apologetic face, the Fourth Generation snapped.

『There you go again with your heedless luxuries!』
(Please stop. When you shout that loud, I can practically feel my magic draining out.)

The feeling of having your Mana drained out arbitrarily by others was truly a detestable one. It's tough on both my body and mind.

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When I fell asleep at the inn, I found myself in the same room as before.

The room I saw when I was called into the Jewel was something like an artificially manufactured image.

It was the room I used to talk with my predecessors, but at the same time, it felt like I was watching a dream.

They were usually carrying out noisy debates, but today, it seemed they have something important to say.

『I did some thinking on my own, and the truth is, there's something that came to mind, but…』

As the first was saying something along those lines, the second cut him off.

Having his opinion being blatantly denied, the savage styled First Generation was pissed off.

『More importantly, shouldn't we decide some rules about our conversations? At this rate, Lyle looks like he's going to drop dead, you know.』

Perhaps because he was worried about my Mana, the Second's opinion was welcomed by my grandfather.

『You all are too lively! What do you plan on doing if my grandson collapses!?』

Apparently, the ancestors were memories recorded within the Jewel, and the very representation of the skills in it. It wasn't that a part of their souls were left behind or anything.

They were already long dead.

But as recordings, and as skills, they remained in the Jewel. They

maintained the form they had in their primes during life, and their personalities were also reflected, so they were pretty much no different from when they were alive, or something like that.

There, the Third Generation spoke.

『We should decide a facilitator. Max, you do it.』

As no one else wanted to do it, the remaining members voiced their approval.

『No objections. Have at it.』
『I think that sounds fine.』
『Right.』
『W-why are you guys pushing everything onto me!?』

The Fourth Generation flew into a rage, but without being able to do anything to alter the flow of the room, and perhaps because he had a pessimistic personality from the start, he took it on.

After that, the rule making continued.

『Saying personal names, or pops, or grandfather will probably make Lyle confused, so how about we just make it uniform by saying which generation?』

As the Third Generation said that, there wasn't any particular opposition.

『Well then, to take Lyle's minimalistic Mana reserve into consideration, how do we keep conversations to a minimum?』

"… Was I just casually dissed?"

The Fifth Generation voiced that clearly. I get the feeling he was the one with the least amount of mercy here.

『I mean, it's miniscule, isn't it? Just how do you go about running out of fuel after just a few shots of magic? It's at a level where it can't be used in real combat. 』

As the ancestors continued to complain about my low Mana, the rule making ended. And wait, I'm pretty sure I've trained quite a bit, so being told it was small was actually quite unexpected.

『Oy, don't ignore me, people! Aren't I supposed to be the First Generation of the Walt House!? I'm a super VIP!』

Even after coming this far, none present had tried listening to anything the First Generation was saying.

Hearing that, the Second Generation gave a scornful laugh. It appeared that there was some discord between the First and Second.

The Facilitator, the Fourth Generation, adjusted the positioning of his glasses as he approved the First's proposal.

『We're being conscious of conserving Mana here, so please keep it short, First Generation.』

『… At least throw in a –sama somewhere in there… Oh, my business was with Lyle's sister. She was a perfect girly with a certain atmosphere, was it? Lyle, there's something I'd like to ask.』

"Sure."

He was giving off a much more serious air than usual, as he stared at me in earnest.

『That sister of yours prettier than her age might suggest, or just a beauty, right? What's more enough that you would call it unnatural? Men must come by for her hand, right?』

After being told that, I thought for a bit. Despite her being only thirteen, she was a little sister where the word voluptuous was most fitting.

Naturally, while my parents didn't approve of it, there were numerous marriage proposals. Even so, there were even men from Houses with names known across the land.

“Let’s see. For her age… I won’t say her entire body was favored, but she was pretty. Rather than childishly cute, she was truly a beautiful person, appearance-wise.”

『I see. Let me add on another, but you said the atmosphere in the manor became strange, right? Until you became ten, it was completely normal, right? And that it suddenly changed…』

As it was a painful memory, I silently nodded. I continued to struggle to be looked at, but that was never rewarded.

『There’s no doubt about it!』

The First Generation slammed his fist on the table, and grandly declared the truth he reached about my sister.

『Your sister… Celes is a monster!』

“… What?”
『『『… uwah…』』』

The air instantly became doubtful. While the air around him was much more diligent than usual, and the surroundings were earnestly listening to him, this was the result.

The Fourth generation signaled the end of today’s meeting.

『Okay. We’ve decided the rules today, so let’s wrap this up here. It’s best if we avoid having a meeting every day, but if there’s ever a need for one, we’ll contact you from this side, Lyle.』

“Yeah, please do.”

As I was feeling happy that my Mana problem would be contained, surrounding members stood up to disperse. Since there were doors, I assumed they were exits, but it appears each ancestor had a private room.

『That’s all folks, good work everyone.』
『Much appreciated.』
『Yeah, good work~.』

『Hah, just when I thought he would be serious for once, this is what happens…』

As they all returned to their own rooms, First shouted out.

『Listen to me, ya' bastards! I'm serious here! She's seriously a monster!』

By thinking that I wanted to return, it seems I was able to disappear from the room. I say some parting words and vanished.

"Ah, well then, until next time."

『GOD DAMMIT!!』

Within the meeting room-like space, the Founder of the Walt House's voice resounded.

Chapter 04 - Dalien

Just as the peddler suggested, we hitched a carriage from a city to the capital.

The road was well maintained, and the coupled carriage was pulled by a total of six horses. The ride wasn't bad, but getting a lift all the way to the Capital cost quite a pretty penny, it seems.

A sum of five silver coins a piece.

With me and Novem together, it was a total equal to a whole gold coin.

I sat and observed the scenery as I stared out the carriage.

Perhaps she was tired, but Novem was sound asleep. She was leaning on me, and breathing peacefully.

(Has she been pushing herself?)

I may be worthless by myself, but it was because Novem was with me that I could get all the way here. Otherwise, I would have probably gotten there eventually, but some time along the way, I would have ended up on foot.

Having never camped out before, travelling alone was completely out of the question, according to my ancestors. I had the vague notion that I would be alright, but it seems they were all fed up with the naivety of my thought process.

Even the Seventh Generation, my grandfather, didn't stick up for me on that one.

In order not to wake Novem, I kept my eyes on the outside.

As I was doing that, I heard the Second's voice.

Today is his day to look after me, apparently.

I don't know the criterion, but while travelling, the first and second, and occasionally the fourth would start up a conversation with me.

There was the problem of my Mana, so having two talk to me at once was tiring. For that reason, they call out to me alone.

『You've sure got some convenient things around these days. We didn't have this coupling system in my day.』

In a small voice, I answered.

"Is that how it was?"

『It's because that was almost two hundred years ago. Magic Tools, was it? We never had anything that convenient.』

Magic Tools were something built to replace gems. They were a much simpler way to bestow skills unto people. However, perhaps because gems were the stronger of the two, it was impossible for one to use multiple Magic Tools at once.

It's always either one or two.

But there was the problem with my Mana, so right now, I can't use a Magic Tool. The Ancestors' Skills included, the current me is bearing quite a load.

And the majority of them are ones I can't even use.

Or should I say… the Seventh Generation's skill was too much for me, myself to handle, so I couldn't use it. The Second's was one that interacted with and affected other skills.

About the First Generation's, because he didn't recognize me, he didn't want to let me use it.

The other Skills were similar. Saying my body couldn't handle it, they refused to give permission to use them.

(I'm in a state where I can't use any of them, aren't I?)

"But even if they'll supply somewhere to stay along the way, is five silver that expensive?"

Apparently, my sense of money is clearly worse than I thought. Fifth generation onward, in order to live their lives as full nobles, had abandoned the sense of money of commoners.

That was apparent when I was choosing a weapon.

Fifth onwards said the more expensive ones would last for an exponentially longer time, and had a good cost-performance-ratio as they recommended a high-priced sword.

But taking the money I had on hand into consideration, that proved impossible. While I was able to afford it, it would make the travels afterwards difficult, so the Second and Third vetoed the decision.

『I think it's on the cheaper side. You have a safe ride to the capital, and you've secured lodging for only five silver, you know? If it were me, I would be delighted. Though they probably have quite a large pool of customers to reap profits from.』

From a commoner's standpoint, five silver was a hefty sum.

But because it promised for safe travels, there are quite a few who use the system.

『You sure live in a convenient era.』

After saying that, the Second Generation remained silent. I took the Jewel in my hands, and looked into it. The blue crystal was a treasure handed down by the Walt House for generations.

Is it alright for something like that to be in my hands right now?

(I hope it doesn't become a problem.)

As I thought that, Novem stirred a little. I stuffed the Jewel attached to a necklace back under my shirt.

But Novem didn't wake.

"Still, for the next five days, we'll just be travelling like this…"

Around us, horse mounted guards circled the carriage. Looking at them, the other customers seemed relieved.

However, according to my predecessors' words, the skill level of the escorts wasn't all that high. That back in their day, the guards were much more skillful. A bragging contest of 「My generation was amazing」 unfolded.

(But that part about them bringing up their time is a little… right…)

Like Novem, I opted to sleep.

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The evening of the fifth day.

Having arrived at the destination of the coupled carriages, the imperial capital, we decided to search for an inn, as it was already dark.

It would be a pain once night fell, and more than anything, fatigue had built up in my body over those five days of travel. The unfamiliar environment was simply that hard on me.

We should rest a bit… is what the Ancestors proposed. For Novem's sake.

"Lyle-sama, are you certain? It's a bit of an expensive lodging this time."

In front of our eyes, was an inn that, unlike the other ones, was equipped with baths in the private rooms.

Its outward appearance was, as befitting the capital city of the Bahnseim Kingdom, 【Centralle】, exceedingly extravagant.

The air around it was completely different from the villages and towns we passed through.

“Let’s take it easy for today, at least. It’s important to heal the pent up fatigue of a long voyage (And if I don’t, the ancestors are going to get loud, aren’t they).”

Mainly the First to the Fourth. They seem quite wary of her.

If you’re wondering just what it was Novem’s Forxuz House did for them for them to be that grateful…

The first received extensive assistance when he was reclaiming and cultivating the abandoned settlements on his new territory, the Second was imparted with their know-how on how to manage land, and they even helped him search for his bride.

When the Third generation was confused with his own elevation of status, they lent a had as well, apparently.

And after the Third Died in battle, the Fourth suddenly had status thrust at him at a young age, and because of his father’s efforts, the House obtained Baron status under him.

At that time, it was apparently the Forxuz House that supported him from the shadows.

To summarize!

(My homeland, the Walt House, would never have developed so far if the Forxuzes weren’t there… even so, as we’ve made them a vassal house, we’ve been unable to repay those debts.)

It isn’t anything directly related to Novem, but they’re sentiments I tip

my hat to.

Of course, that train of thought changed heavily Fifth Generation onwards.

Since they'd associated with each other for many years, they were under the impression that the debt was already paid off. It's just the First to Fourth had direct, personal debts, so they weren't satisfied with that.

(And wait, after being so close, for us to not have blood relations…)

I'll bet there were quite a few circumstances, but anyways, the deeply connected Walt and Forxuz Houses had never been connected through blood.

Normally, after so long, it wouldn't be strange for there to be a marriage or two thrown in there.

(What are you guys even doing… my House… no, my ancestors.)

From what I'd heard in the meeting room, I feel something vital wasn't in place somewhere.

From what I'd heard by hearsay, the First Generation was supposedly the one who cut open the path to savage land, and founded his family there. Even so, in reality, he was one who looks like he would often be mistaken for a pelt-wearing barbarian.

"Thank you for accompanying me this far. Well then, shall we go?"

"Yes."

We entered the inn, and found a counter by the door.

It was well maintained, and the room was lighted by a magic stone-like Magic Tool.

The clerk behind the counter cordially welcomed us.

""Will you be staying the night?

“Yeah.”

Even their reception was polite.

I’ll be able to get some rest for the first time in a while. That’s what I thought.

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『Zero points.』

As I was sleeping in a fluffy bed for the first in a long time, I was called to the meeting room.

But there was no one there but the First Generation.

He gave me a grade the moment we met, and I’m not really sure how to respond upon being awarded a zero. So…

“Is that so? … Can I go back yet?”

『Why do you have such a low sense of competition!? You’re too well behaved that it’s boring!』

But no matter what answer I return, he’s going to be angry, isn’t he?

As I thought that, I decided to hear what the First had to say.

“And so, what is it? I want to get some rest in preparation for tomorrow.”

『I know! But there was something I wanted to tell you no matter what.』

He seemed serious, but he may merely repeat the same monster

accusations as before.

I gave an unpleasant face, but his eyes were earnest. And earnestly, to me… he started talking about the creation of the Kingdom.

『I was born around the time the Kingdom was fifty years old. At that time, there were still survivors from the violent domestic turmoil that resulted.』

"… Hah, is that so?"

『In the place where I lived, there were some soldier who were around when the Royal Faction and the Noble Faction began warring amongst themselves, you see. Those old men would often say it… they often asked why it was they just fought as they were told at the time.』

I recalled the Kingdom's history that spanned three hundred years. As part of my training, I also studied history, and there, I learned how the country came to be.

Around the time, a Monarchy was acting quite corrupt, and the local nobles couldn't bear it anymore, so they raised some revolts. What they made from it was the 【Bahnseim Kingdom】.

"Isn't that because the flames in them had died down?"

『I think so too. But, you see, those old dogs said it was as if they were living in a dream. And at the same time, there was this high-up beauty in the Royal Faction.』

I guess there was quite a pretty woman there.

Well, the current opinion on the matter is that figures like that are mostly the product of stories, and it's precisely because times and situations change that war happens.

It was a revolt that happened because it was inevitable, or so I was taught.

However, there was apparently a time where a single beautiful woman

controlled politics as she wished.

But even if a beauty like that was there, no decent country would let their politics be led around like that.

It's because the core of the country was already corrupt by that time.

"If it's about that beautiful woman, I think I've heard about her before. But wasn't that just one of the many excuses that started it?"

『That's wrong. They really exist, you know. Should I call it the turning points of history? At times like that, the monsters come out. Those guys are much scarier and more malicious than some monster you'd find in the forest.』

Still with a serious expressions, he continued to speak.

『You guys may think it's some idle gossip, but it really was a chaotic time. My grandparents even said there were way too many strange happenings in that era. They couldn't believe it themselves. And the one who stirred it all up was… 』

"… A monster?"

『Right! A Supreme beauty who ruined the country! A general a match for an army of thousands! A Magician great enough to lift islands! Those guys all come out at the turning points of history. Your sister is a monster like that. To think a Monster would be born of my own lineage.』

(TL: If you don't get it, this is a metaphor.)

"T-that couldn't be."

As I voiced my skepticism, the First spoke..

『Then you think I'd deceive my cute son? Even if you're rotten, you're the man who was to become the next Head. You must have been treated befitting of that. If you don't like something, then giving an order to change it is normal for your ilk. Also, the fact that you got the minimal treatment is your own fortune.』

“Fortune?”

『That’s right. You know you were in a situation where it wouldn’t be strange if you died, right? More so than kicking you out because they didn’t like you, it would be easier on them to kill you, and feign that it was an illness.』

Being told that was quite a shock. I truly was in an environment where my needs were minimized. Of course, it was also one where I was never recognized.

And after being told, the fact that I wasn’t killed began to sound strange for the first time. Even for Celes, who treated me as a hated figure.

『Finally starting to get it? You never thought it was strange before, right? Where was the charm that pulled the wool over your eyes? A monster great enough to twist your environment. You’re lucky to have survived. That may just be how much your parents loved you, and resisted that monster.』

A monster that even altered the environment… that was Celes, the First Generation concluded.

『Those ones have nothing like common sense, and it may just be by a whim that you were thrown away. There’s no way for me to understand a monster’s feelings. But they truly do exist.』

The First’s monsters of history.

I was slightly swallowed by his words. My experience with Celes makes it something I can’t laugh away.

“Then… is Celes the cause of it all? I wasn’t wrong?”

『No idea about that one. By what I know about you, you’re a brat oblivious to the world that causes trouble to the old man’s descendants. A true spoiled brat. And I also don’t know that girl known as Celes. I only ever began to be able to speak like this when your Skill manifested in here.』

“R-really?”

The things I lacked a response to continued to multiply, and I could do nothing but stay silent. There, the First Generation spoke.

“Hey, you, what do you plan on doing from here on out?”

“Eh? Well… I’ll become an adventurer, right?”

『Wrong! In a time when the country might be swept up in turmoil, and you know it’s going to happen, what is your course of action, is my question! The life of that Novem-chan’s in your hands too! If you act poorly, I’ll smack you, you got that?』

Today, I learned that there were many things I hadn’t been giving thought to.

I thought it would work out one way or another, but right now, I have the existence called Novem alongside me. You could say she arbitrarily tagged along of her own accord, but abandoning her isn’t a possible option.

“I-I am…”

『… You need to think of yourself more. Just looking at you irritates me.』

Saying that, the First Generation headed off to his room. He opened the door, and slammed it behind him with all his might. Having been left in the meeting room, I thought for a while about what it was I should do.

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“It’s come into sight, Lyle-sama!”

Standing up high on the loading cart of the wagon, Novem shouted as

she pointed at the city of Dalien that had come into view.

Perhaps because our long voyage was finally coming to an end, Novem's expression was bright. My mood had also become lighter.

I plan to exert myself as an adventurer in Dalien for the time being. Meaning our travels will be put on a temporary hold.

"It sure has. It doesn't look like a bad place."It didn't seem overflowing with people like the Imperial Capital. And I won't say it was noisy, but it was a lively city.

Dalien… like Zell had told me, it was a town with the energy to drive forwards its development.

I looked at the side profile of Novem's happy face as I thought.

(Just… what is it that I should be doing…)

I had been thinking about it since yesterday, but I couldn't find an answer whatsoever. Even if I wanted to consult someone, it seems that today's the First Generation's turn to look over me, so even if I call out, there's no response.

He must be feeling quite irritated, looking at me.

"The adventurers' guild in Dalien is is quite big, I hear. There's an abundance in work to be found, and it's said to be a perfect place for a novice to start out."

"Where did you hear something like that?"

"When we were out shopping in the capital. It was where we were to stay for a while, so I was curious as to what sort of place it was."

As Novem said that, I heard a voice from the Jewel.

『… What a good kid. She's more than you deserve. Compared to that, you didn't even dry to collect information… che!』

I heard him click his tongue.

"… Novem, I've caused you quite a bit of trouble. I-I'll also work hard from here on."

I felt my own worthlessness, as I gave my thanks to her.

"Don't worry about it. I'm doing this because I want to. Lyle-sama, let's work hard together."

"Y-yeah!"

There, this time, the voice came from the owner of the cart, a young peddler…

"Che!"
『Che!』

… He clicked his tongue. The First Generation as well.

Chapter 05 - Adventurers' Guild

Dalien was a town built close to the Imperial Capital.

In recent years, it had been overflowing with vitality, and its notable growth had become famous.

Compared to the cities in the Walt Territory I called home, it was small, but the feeling of energy felt from the well-ordered townscape was fresh to me.

"A two day journey to travel from the capital to the post town huh… It sure is nice that the roads are well maintained. We moved quite fast." (ED: post-town)

Having arrived in Dalien, I stretched my body and surveyed my surroundings as Novem indicated a sign posted nearby.

"There's a simple map here. The names of establishments are on it."

How convenient, I thought as I read over it with her. On it, a building was indicated as the adventurers' guild.

Based on the arrangement of the map…

"Lyle-sama, isn't it that building over there?"

The building visible from the entrance to Dalien was higher than the two and three story buildings around it.

Perimeter-wise, it was likely the biggest building as well.

It looks like Dalien's adventurers' guild was raking in quite a bit.

"Back home… no, it's larger than the branch on House Walt's territory."

Seeing me revise my words, Novem looked as if she wanted to say

something. Because of that, I forced a smile on my face.

“Well then, we have some time. How about we go register at the guild?”

“Yes, Lyle-sama.”

I held the smiling girl’s travel bag as I walked ahead.

(Even so, both Zell and Novem said it, but… Money disappears before you know it.)

My wallet had gotten considerably lighter.

Naturally, we purchased quite a bit before we headed here. Our most expensive expenditure was likely the sword. I bought a Sabre, but perhaps because they rarely got requests for the type of blade; the few they stocked had a high price tag.

(I really have to consider our finances. And those ancestors have a fundamentally different set of values…)

Values vary by generation, and a sense for money is the same.

Due to the finances built up over the previous generations, my grandfather the Seventh, the Sixth, and the Fifth generally had a rich man’s mindset.

The first persisted that a man’s weapon had to be an axe or blunt weapon, and he complained that a sabre wouldn’t be of any use.

『Otherwise, you could just throw the timber and ricks scattered around, right? If there are none, your hands are more than enough.』

… He truly was the owner of a mindset overflowing with wilderness.

Walking towards the conspicuous building, we saw other adventurer-esque people heading in the same direction.

Their outfits were widely varied, but there were some I couldn’t see as

anything other than thugs among them.

They hung knives at their waists, and walked in a way as if to intimidate the passers-by on the street.

Adventurers usually travel with weapons on hand. The guild manages it, but if you ask if that actually lowers the crime rate among them, that's apparently not the case.

I mean, a majority of them are ruffians, or perhaps mercenaries.

Among them, some simply had yet to get wanted posters issued and were in hiding. The Guild tried to be careful about such things, but by the look of it, it wasn't going too well.

In truth, having thirty to forty percent be decent adventurers was considered a good trend. There's also a large portion of people just acting as adventurers in their spare time.

(Well… it's just something I heard from the ancestors, though…)

It wasn't knowledge of my own.

I only had a vague understanding of adventurers. But once I knew the true contents of them, I felt like the past me that admired them was a fool.

In reality, less than ten percent of adventurers were the ones children admire.

"We've arrived, Lyle-sama."

"Hmm? Why is the Guild's first floor a market?"

On the first floor of the building, which was clearly indicated on a large sign as the adventurers' guild, was a shop-like area supported by pillars.

Carts and adventurers as well as merchants came and went.

And there, merchants and adventurers, and people who looked like

civilians, were shopping around.

“Lyle-sama, that’s the venue used for trade. Using the first floor, adventurers can trade in whatever monster parts or other things they brought back with them.”

“Eh? Really? You don’t hand over whatever you got to the guild?”

Novem gave a troubled expression.

“I’m none too knowledgeable, but going outside, exterminating monsters, and bringing them back is… really dirtying, right? It’s quite difficult if they all go into the building like that. Look, there’s a bath house next door. If you really have an urgent matter for which you need a receptionist, you go there to remove the filth.”

Yes, when you think about it, turning over monster materials at the counter was definitely strange. They reek of blood and leave nasty stains.

The reception desks are probably for paperwork, so it’s normal for them to create another area for this.

“O-of course. Aha, ahahaha.”

I had resolved myself to work hard, but I was already showing off my ignorant ways. How many times has it been already?

(Will I really be fine here?)

With my arms full of anxiety, I headed to the reception desk on the second floor with Novem. We climbed the stairs and heeded the signs to press onwards.

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The second floor of the Adventurer’s guild contained the receptions

desk, and its counter was really wide.

A line of staff members dealt with adventurers from one side.

“There sure are a lot.”

“That’s right. I’ve never been registered before, so I’m a bit nervous.”

From the Jewel, I heard not the First, but the Second’s voice.

『That old man’s gotten sulky, so I’ll explain in his place. No wait, I doubt you have to worry about the guild’s registration. They’re quite used to dealing with newbies, I’ll bet.』

“Wouldn’t it be fine if I just got the Second Generation from the start?”

To indicate that I understood, I touched the jewel once. While keeping my ears ready for the Second’s voice, I began to consider which line to join.

Looking at it, there was a clear difference in the lines.

Are those young ones fresh adventurers? Those guys were lined up at the counter with the beautiful staff member managing it.

A woman with an amazing smile handled them with a happy expression.

There was also an aunty who seemed used to the job, and that’s where the adventurers who looked to be in a rush were lined up.

The number of female staff was relatively high. There were few males on call.

I was about to step into the older lady’s line, but there, the Second Generation stopped me.

『Lyle, why not just go to the shortest one?』

(Eh? If it's the shortest one, then…)

As I looked for the line the Second was talking about, I saw a brown-skinned, muscular male staff member with red, buzz-cut hair.

With that appearance, he was quite scary.

As I hesitated, the Second spoke up.

『Don't worry. Among these ones, he's the most decent.』

(What part of that appearance is decent?)

He had removed the overcoat the others wore over their clothes, and I could clearly sense the steel-like muscles under that shirt. If I get him mad, are you sure his fists won't fly?

His looks made me think that.

『On. With. It! Don't keep Novem-chan waiting!』

(Why are the First to Fourth pushing Novem at me? No, I understand she's the daughter of a family that took care of them all, but…)

Reluctantly, I headed for the line I was told. There, Novem gave a surprised voice.

"You chose that receptionist? Since it was Lyle-sama, I thought you would go for the one who was processing work quickly."

"Yeah, that's what I thought too, at first…"

I couldn't say that I still thought that one was better. But Novem looked relieved.

"I was also going to recommend that receptionist, so it all works out fine."

"Eh? Really?"

It seems Novem was of the same opinion as the Second.

“Yes. The way he’s working seems quite courteous, and for people who are aiming for registration like us, it’s best we obtain a polite impression.”

As she said that, the Second agreed.

『Nice. That’s exactly right. Rather than a beauty who did rough work while throwing around a smile, and one who did quick work, that you didn’t know whether she was used to the job or not, you should pick the one who’s, while scary-looking, doing the job with kindness and courtesy. And that beauty over there ain’t happening.』

It appeared that the Second was against her, so I looked at the beauty’s line.

“Eh~? Lunch is a bit troublesome~.”
“Isn’t it fine? Once your work’s over, let’s get something to eat.”
“But still~.”

She handled it with a smile, but the next person…

“Yes, here is your reward.”
“U-um…”
“Next in line please.”

The treatment she gave to the adventurer with a good face and good equipment, and to the one with good equipment, but a normal face, was clearly different.

Also, the normal-faced one looked troubled.

“Please wait! The promised reward sum was different, wasn’t it! The client’s evaluation was…”

“Even if you tell me something like that~.”

As she gave a bothered face, the adventurers lined up behind acted out.

“Oy! We’re just as busy here. Don’t make such a fuss over a few copper!”

As I looked over that, I resolved myself to never, ever, get into that person’s line.

『That ain’t happening, right? And wait, she should really be taken off the receptionist line. Though I get the feeling that with that attitude, she wouldn’t work well in the back, either.』

The Second’s evaluation was quite strict.

Apparently, the beautiful receptionist was popular among newbies and flirtatious adventurers. But, her work ethic was the worst.

(I’m glad I didn’t choose there.)

As I thought something like that, Novem’s voice reached me.

“Lyle-sama, you’re up next.”

“Ah.”

My turn came around.

Unlike seeing him from afar, seeing the man up close amplified the destructive power. While it’s true that his body was big, he also had a certain atmosphere.

It was as if he was a warrior.

『This person may have been an adventurer himself. If he started working as a clerk after retiring from that, you should expect some excellent conduct from him. Lyle, start coming to this person from here on.』

As the second was arbitrarily deciding things on his own, I requested an adventurer’s registration from the man.

“I’d like a registration form. Ah, two please.”

He understood and prepared some blank sheets.

“Registration, is it? Well, nice to meet you, I’m known as【Hawkins】. If there’s anything you don’t understand, don’t hesitate to ask me. Also, if you’re both registering, how about registering as a party? ”

Party registration? As I tilted my head, Novem responded faster than the Second.

“We’ll be in your care.”

As opposed to his appearance, Hawkins-san had quite a polite tone. The paperwork began proceeding forwards.

“After registering here, your home guild branch will be set as this one, here in Dalien. When you want to change the center of your activity, please submit a transfer request to the guild. After that, submit an arrival form at your final destination and fill out the paperwork to make that guild your home. Otherwise, even if you can sell monster materials to the guild, you won’t be able to take up requests, so please commit it to mind.”

I filled out the blank page, and Hawkins checked to see if I had missed anything. Both me and Novem were quite used to this sort of desk work.

I’d been trained for it back home, and more than anything, there were many things that required my signature back there.

“Splendid. Then could you please apply some of your blood to these two sheets? Please make use of this needle. Ah, don’t worry, it’s been properly disinfected. You as well, miss.”

“Yes.”

“Thank you.”

I used the needle to prick my fingertip. The blood welled up and formed a small ball, before I smeared it on the silver sheet.

“Wonderful. This here works as medicine, so feel free to use it after wiping off the blood. Well then, please write your name on them as well. One of them will be kept by the guild.”

The silver sheet was something like a guild-issued identification card. Otherwise known as a Guild Card.

If its owner were ever to die, it was a mysterious item where the name on the card would disappear. It also carried some records of its holder’s actions that the guild could read at their own discretion.

Hearing that explanation, the Second…

『… So when so many years go by, you get something this convenient. My time never had a tool like that, you know? And wait, isn’t it an item that would usually have a pricetag on it?』

It was just as the Second said.

“With your first registration, the cost comes to five silver coins. But if payment seems impossible, then a small commission from your future rewards… ten to twenty percent of your compensation will be put towards paying the fee. Will that be fine?”

Novem took out a gold coin.

“No, we’ll pay.”

“Understood. Then your Guild Card is being prepared, so please wait on the sofa over there.”

Hawkins-san took the sheets over to the door behind the counter. After a short while, he returned, and returned to his reception desk work.

Novem and I headed for the sofa, and as we sat in it side by side, we began to draw some glances from the surroundings.

Tongue clicking and envious eyes were directed at me. The reason was clear.

It was because of the looks of the girl sitting beside me.

“Just as I thought, he was a polite and kind one, Lyle-sama.”

“T-that’s right.”

Novem didn’t seem bothered in the slightest. There, the First, who had been quiet up ‘til now, spoke up.

『You blockheads! Don’t be throwing such vile glances at Novem-chan, ya’ bastards!!』

The Second chimed in.

『If you do anything to Novem-chan, Lyle’s going to beat the living daylights out of you!』

Finally, even the Fourth spoke up.

『Well, it’s true that we can’t do anything to them directly from here, but… doesn’t it just sound pitiful when you say it, you two? And wait, don’t act up so much, please. Lyle’s going to collapse.』

While letting out the aura of a worldly-wise man, the Fourth shut the other two up. The height of their emotions, and the act of making it so I could hear them, depleted my Mana.

(To get so tired from doing absolutely nothing… it’s as if I’ve become diseased.)

I had never thought of my magic as small before. But from what I hear from the ancestors, I’m quite low on the scale.

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“Well then, these are your Guild Cards. You’ve already been

registered as a party, so you've had each other's' names carved into your cards."

The card Hawkins-san handed over had my name carved in large letters onto it. And in small letters, Novem's was there as well.

"Here is the pamphlet of the guild's terms and conditions. We're not offering any training today, but tomorrow morning, in the third floor's meeting room, there's a short course geared towards novice adventurers, so if you have the time, please drop by."

He highly recommended us to take it.

"Thank you for the thorough explanation."

As Novem offered her thanks, Hawkins-san stared at us, slightly lost in thought.

"Is something wrong?"

I tried asking, but he returned a bitter smile.

"No, it's just that it's rare to find new adventurers who aren't scared of me, so I unintentionally… Also, this is just my personal opinion, but… you two, if you have the economic leisure, how about you hire an advisor?"

"An advisor?"

On Novem's response, Hawkins-san began explaining.

"Yes. A guild-certified excellent adventurer, for a few months… the usual period being three. For that time, you hire the advising adventurer as a client. There are numerous types of contracts, but you could pay with a percentage of your rewards, or pay a lump sum upfront."

Based on the payment method, the quality of hired adventurer is subject to change, it seems.

Paying with a cut of your own wages gave you a lower-middle class one at best. But by paying it upfront, an intermediate leve adventurer… or

perhaps even an upper level one would take on the job.

In exchange, the cost was a whopping ten gold.

(No, we don't have that sort of money.)

Thinking that, I was about to ask Novem if she wanted to hire one on commission, however…

"Then we'll pay upfront, please."

"… Eh? Upfront, is it?"

Novem produced ten golden coins from her purse. As Hawkins-san accepted it, he had quite a nervous expression on his face.

Having said that, he probably expected us to choose the percent based option.

"Wait, Novem!?"

As I tried to stop her, she began explaining with a serious expression.

"Lyle-sama, we'll be able to receive guidance from one the adventurers' guild recognizes as a skilled adventurer. We should treasure this opportunity. Especially since it seems that we don't have a great enough understanding of what it is an adventurer is."

I do think Novem's opinion is correct, but I'm more shocked that she paid out ten gold coins at the drop of a hat.

She's much too different from me, who was thrown out penniless, and who only had money borrowed from a servant.

Hawkins-san asks for confirmation once more.

"Then you will be paying a lump sum of ten gold coins. Is that correct?"

"Yes, I'll leave it to you. Please get us an excellent advisor."

“Of course. If they turn out not to your liking, we’re willing to refund the money you paid.”

He seemed to have some confidence, but still, the conversation seemed to be proceeding without my input for quite a while.
And

『Hey man… looking from the side-lines, you look quite useless right now, Lyle.』

The Second Generation’s words were quite heavy on my heart.

Chapter 06 - Money

After completing our adventure registration, Novem and I found a relatively moderate priced inn to stay at.

Having secured and settled into a room, we looked over the booklet Hawkins had given us.

Its contents were quite simple.

【Don't cause trouble to people.】

There were also some things pertaining to the guild's rules and manners.

"… It's as if it were geared towards children."

I let out my frank opinion, and Novem concurred.

"That's right. But things like this are important too."

From the Jewel, the Second Generation's voice showed extreme approval.

『Right! That's right! There are a lot of people out there who can't even follow simple iron-clad rules!』
(Those words seem to have his true feelings behind them, or should I say, it seems he has a lot of discontentment, that Second Generation.)

I looked through it from start to finish, before closing it and putting it away. Novem had also finished it.

There, I decided to bring up something I had been curious about.

"Novem, about that money…"

Before I could finish, the Second Generation cut me off from within the Jewel.

『Lyle, stop! Don't ask about it! No, wait, I don't want to hear about it!』

But the First Generation seemed curious, as he pressed further.

『Why's that? Just ask if you're curious. And wait, the Forxuz House is currently a Baron one, right? They must have deep pockets, right? Does that mean we've been able to repay them a bit?』

As the First Generation was letting out a satisfied voice, the Second shouted.

And along with that, my Mana depleted.

『You fool! Even if they're a Baron House, Novem-chan's the second daughter! Preparing such a large sum is going to be quite reckless, even for a Baron's kid. Recognize that!』

(… Eh? Really?)

I hadn't noticed that. The value of ten gold was still not what I would consider to be that large of a sum.

Novem's expression was a little troubled.

But she smiled as she spoke.

"It's fine, Lyle-sama. It definitely was quite an expenditure, but we still have some reserves."

As I thought, ten Gold really was a hefty sum.

Since I didn't even have many gold ones on me, it even made me mildly jealous.

"I'm surprised you had so much on you. Was it from your parents?"

"N-no, well… um…"

“It wasn’t? Then what?”

There, the Second started screaming loudly. However, I was the only one who could hear it.

『Don’t go any further, is what I’m trying to tell you!!』

Novem hung her head. Finally realizing that I had probably asked what I shouldn’t have, I began to become a little panicked.

“N-no, well… I was just a little curious, so…”

I tried to bring an end to the conversation, but before that, Novem opened her mouth.

“My parents did indeed prepare some funds for my travels. But, well… it was my own flight of fancy, so I couldn’t really accept it, and… so, well…”

She looked like she had some trouble getting the words out, before she voiced something unthinkable.

“The clothes and household implements prepared for my marriage to Lyle-sama, I sold them. I deeply apologize.”

Looking at her disheartened face, I realized I had screwed up. On top of that, the ancestors in the Jewel started talking amongst themselves.

『Eh? Implements… eh?』

The First was bewildered.

『That’s why I warned you! Stop it… the feeling of guilt is…』

The third also spoke.

『This is about my era, but the dowry prepared for the house you marry into, for a woman, it was quite a fortune back then… how is it now?』

The Seventh Generation answered.

『It still is a fortune. It's a fortune you bring with you from your own home, and the family you marry into doesn't have the right to use it freely. And wait, the family that sent her out was probably doing the best they could, so… considering the Walt House's current status, we may have asked the unreasonable of the Forxuz House.』

Hearing that, the First and Fourth Generations screamed out.

『NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!』
『That's why I told you not to ask! For a girl to have that sort of money on her person, there's got to be a reason!!』
『I'm sorry sis, I'm sorry that even my descendants are bringing trouble to you…』
(TL: He uses ane-san, which, rather than siblings, hints to a boss-subordinate relationship)
『What are we going to do about this one!? My descendants are still bothering the Forxuz House! Just what do I have to do to repay this debt!?』

The First just kept screaming. The second seemed to have a vague idea from the start.

The Third seemed to reminisce about the times he was taken care of by the Forxus House, and he began to apologize.

From his voice, the Fourth Generation seemed to be spilling quite an amount of tears.

(This is using up my Mana like crazy, you know… and wait, my ancestors gave them this much trouble as well?)

For them to support the Walt House this far, were they not an overly benevolent clan?

In truth, Novem was also serving me.

(Also… this feeling of guilt is nothing to laugh at.)

To marry into a family, even if you weren't a noble, the woman's family was supposed to prepare a dowry. I should add on, 'if it's a decent family,' that is.

But from a girl's point of view, marriage was one of the most important scenes of life's events. The belongings and clothing bought for it were probably purchased without compromise.

To her, it was probably something like her treasure. She sold it, and used it for my sake.

(Eh? But wait a minute… for her to be able to prepare the money in the few days following my expulsion from the house…)

Thinking along those lines, did she open a yard sale with those household implements she gathered up or something?

Noticing that, my face turned pale, but Novem tried to console me.

"Don't worry. They were still officially the property of my parents, but I properly obtained permission. Also, in order for Lyle-sama to succeed as a splendid adventurer, it was a necessary transaction. I'm happy I was able to use them like that."

Once they'd been bought once, furniture counted as used. What's more, if she was selling them in a rush, the merchants would likely beat down the prices. Naturally, the merchant's side was probably troubled, having her come to them all of a sudden.

Compared to the price they were bought at, there's no doubt she sold them for quite a lower sum.

Perhaps because they were tired from all the screaming, the Jewel was silent. No, there's also the possibility my Mana was at its limit.

In all truth, I did feel considerably tired.

"… Why?"

"Yes?"

“Why would you go that far? They’re the belongings you preciously assembled, right? Even if it wasn’t me, you’d be sure to find a marriage partner soon enough. Even so… why did you go as far as to sell them to tag along with me!?”

“Lyle-sama…”

I ended up taking out some of my anger on her.

Having lost my status as future head, I was a man who was abandoned by his family.

I was oblivious to the world, and I bothered Novem enough that the ancestors were fed up with me.

If you’re looking for anything I’ve built up over the years, the current me has nothing. No status, and no money. I simply couldn’t understand why Novem would stick herself to a man like that.

When my parents began to give me a cold treatment at ten, I gradually witnessed the surrounding people distancing themselves from me. Even at that time, I got the feeling Novem was by my side.

Betting on the slight chance that I would become the next heir, on me…

But right now, I truly have nothing. For her to still follow me is something I couldn’t believe somewhere in my heart.

“There’s no value in trying to serve me! To my younger sister… to Celes, I lost, and my family drove me out! I’m that wimpy and idiotic of a man! I… have no value at all!”

“…”

Novem looked at me with all earnesty. From her violet irises, I averted my eyes. I was scared of seeing her giving up on me.

From back then, I exerted myself, as if driven by fear. I exerted myself

to not be thrown away.

But that effort was always all too easily surpassed. Every time that happened, I just tried even harder than before.

… Even when I knew it would never be requited.

I always kept at it alone.

There, Novem spoke to me.

"… It's because I was always watching."

"Eh?"

"When we were small, Lyle-sama really could accomplish anything, and he was so kind… Do you remember? Back then, I was alone, and even when I was called to the Count-sama's mansion, I couldn't get close to the other kids."

My youthful memories are all nice ones to me. But due to my anguish at ten, I had gradually started to forget them.

"Come to think of that, you're right. But while you were alone, you were quite wary of your surroundings, and to attract people's attention, you would often pull pranks on the men, right?"

By trying to gain attention through mischief, she only served to isolate herself more. As the successor to a Count's house, I remember trying to mediate her disputes.

It's a memory from my childhood.

(That time may have been the most enjoyable of my life.)

"You always tried your hardest, and even after getting a cold reception from your family, you never gave up… Looking at that, I decided to try my best as well."

From ten onwards, I was separated from my surroundings. And I

ended up living mostly alone.

I had memories of Novem being around, but with the rumors being spread about me, I never called out to her.

“It was when I was thirteen. I was called by my parents, and told that my marriage to Lyle-sama had been established. I was happy. Happy that I could support you from your side.”

“… But it’s all useless. My effort was all useless in front of that girl.”

Due to the sudden loss of my Mana, my vision became hazy.

Me taking out my anger was because my sense of self control was waning… I think.

Tears are starting to come out.

“There’s no one… who’ll look at me.”

“I was always watching. Lyle-sama, you tried your best.”

“But I was driven out… I lost everything…”

I indecisively issue out complaints, but Novem gently patted my shoulder.

“I’m here. I’m by your side.”

“My parents don’t need me. They never looked at me… all I wanted was their praise, and yet…”

My tears are sloppily falling down. The feelings I had been enduring in the depths of my heart were starting to rise up, making my mood just a little lighter.

“I was watching. You were splendid, Lyle-sama. No matter the time, you never gave up, and even when you were scared, you would stand your ground. You’re a splendid person.”

Right…

I was afraid.

Of the existence of my sister.

The perfect being known as Celes was truly scary. But I couldn't stand to run away. Even if I knew I would lose, I would challenge her.

And so, I lost everything.

Now, it's starting to not matter to me. I thought everything would work out one way or another, but society isn't that kind of an entity.

For someone like me, I'm not sure where I would be if Novem wasn't there.

"You have value, Lyle-sama. I can say that with confidence. So let's try our hardest together."

"… Yeah."

That night, I fell asleep, while still clinging to Novem…

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『There's no one who'll look at me~.』
『I lost everything~.』
『But Novem-chan's by your side~.』
『This is where you should stand up for yourself! Don't act so spoiled!』

The First, Fourth, and Third were singing, and lastly, the Second shouted at me.

On our second day in Dalien, we took the newbie course at the guild, bought whatever items were necessary, and slept in preparation for

tomorrow.

But I was told that an emergency meeting was to be called, so I was forcefully dragged to the meeting room.

On the circular room surrounded by eight doors, four people were dancing on the table as they teased me.

“S-so you guys were watching…”

It’s embarrassing. Ridiculously embarrassing.

It was so embarrassing that I couldn’t look Novem in the eye the next morning. When night fell, the ancestors began teasing me about an embarrassing memory.

『We’re the ones who should be feeling embarrassed here!』

The First had been singing in high spirits, but his face completely changed as he shouted at me.

“I was embarrassed too, you know! But my Mana was drained, and I was wobbling unsteadily, and my mood was also down, so there was no helping it, given the situation!”

I rebuked with all my might, but the eyes around me were cold.

The Seventh Generation…

『W-well… he was driven out of the house at the ripe age of fifteen, so Lyle’s still a child, right…? S-so you were lonely, Lyle?』

“Stop it! I don’t need your sympathy! It’ll make me unnecessarily embarrassed!”

As I hid my face with both hands, I found that my head was quite feverish.

My face was definitely bright red right now.

In a meeting room like that, perhaps the Fifth Generation was irritated, so he strained his voice.

『Let's get to the main topic already. You've teased him enough, haven't you?』

The Fourth got off the table and returned to his seat.

『That's right. We've got some teasing material for later, so let's call a close today.』

The First Generation said it with a satisfied tone, but having them see my embarrassing moments, I couldn't offer a complaint.

(This'll definitely be arbitrarily brought into conversations to come. These guys…)

"And so, what's with the urgent meeting?"

I wanted to get this over with already, so I transitioned to the main point.

There, the Fourth Generation started up his role as a facilitator and broke the ice.

『Lyle… how about you just get married to Novem-chan already?』

"Yes, marriage, is it. I see…… Eh? Marriage!?"

I looked at Generations Five and onwards.

Generally, Five and on didn't favor Novem.

So about their opinion on the matter…

『Marry her already. And wait, I think it'll be hard for you to find someone willing besides that child. You know the Walt House's precepts, right?』

The Walt Family Precepts were a set or required criterion to go by

when choosing a woman for the Walt Family.

Having apparently been set by the First Generation, it's still held strong in the Walt Family.

"I-I know them… and Novem definitely clears the requirements, but…"

The Walt House Precepts. Those are…

【A woman to be welcomed as a wife must, first of all, have a superior appearance.】
【Second, be healthy.】
【Third, have a sturdy body.】
【Fourth, have a good head on her shoulders】
【Fifth, have nice skin.】

Those five. Since we became a Count family, a clause about magic was also added.

【Sixth, must excel in magic.】

It appears the Fifth Generation tacked that one on.

The Second Generation continues to heavily recommend her.

『You may have been exiled from the Walt house, but no matter how you look at it, the next head's got to be Lyle, right? It's still a continuing family, for argument's sake, and I also went through some trouble, but if you let Novem-chan get away, I doubt you'd find anyone else. And wait, if you're not going to get yourself married after all of that, I'll seriously curse you to death man.』

The Sixth Generation takes control.

『Let's put cursing and whatnot aside for now, and so, there's no objections to this marriage, right? Lyle, go get hitched as soon as you can.』

"N-no, it's not that I don't like Novem. But even if you tell me that all

of a sudden, I don't have the aptitude, or anything like that…"

There, the Third spoke.

『Then you just have to try hard from here on. If you've undergone a proper education, then you should be able to handle most things to some extent. Well, I never had trouble finding a bride, so I don't really know, but it's apparently quite dreadful, you know?』

Hearing that, the Second Flew into a rage.

『That's because I'm the one who found her for you! So that you wouldn't have trouble finding someone like me, just how hard do you think I worked!?』

While meeting room was getting heated up, the First Generation said something quite troublesome.

『Hey… what's a precept?』

As if he really didn't comprehend it, he tilted his head, as he gazed at everyone's faces.

"Eh?"
『… Oy…』
『Uwah.』
『The hell.』
『I kinda had a feeling he would say something like that.』
『Why doesn't the First Generation know?』
『Wait a second. Wasn't it the criteria set forth by the First Generation?』

Everyone was shocked. No, only the Second Generation was shaking with anger, and it looked as if he was going to explode.

The First was completely oblivious to all of this.

『Novem-chan's a good kid, so I do think it's best if you get hitched. But what's all this about precepts? Was there some restriction on choosing marriage partners? What idiot set forth some pain-in-the-ass rule like that?』

The Second stood up, and pointed his finger in rage.

『It was you, dumbass!!』

『Eh? No way.』

It appears that the First Generation had no recollection of the so called regulations.

Chapter 07 - Veteran Adventurer Zelphy

I learned on the morning of the Third Day, that the Walt Family Precepts were actually something that had sprung from a misunderstanding.

On the guild's third floor, Novem and I met the female adventurer who would become our adviser for the first time.

The name of the Adventurer Hawkins-san brought to us was【Zelphy】-san.

Her quirky, short-cut purple hair was quite a distinguishing characteristic, and she appeared in the room with quite a rough appearance. On the bare skin unhidden by her clothes, I could see some remnants of past injuries.

The look in her eyes was sharp, and she really had the atmosphere of a capable adventurer.

"Zelphy-san, these are the two fresh adventurers I'm referring you to."

"It's a pleasure to meet you."

"I-it's a pleasure."

As we gave our greetings, Zelphy-san looked over us and nodded a few times.

"… I thought it was some sort of joke when I heard some newbies had hired me, but it looks like you guys're some nobles from someplace."

Hearing that, I was a little shocked.

Today was the Third Generation's duty, but he seemed mildly surprised as well.

『She's the type where you can't underestimate her because she's a woman. And wait, has there been a rise in female adventurers as of late?

This must be the flow of time… even so, it's a strange feeling.♩

(Strange?)

On the Third Generation's words, I felt like tilting my head, but I stopped myself.

Hawkins-san offers a warning.

"Zelphy-san, inquiring too deeply into a client's origin is…"

"I got it already. I won't be bringin' trouble to boss Hawkins. It's just that I'll need to put out some rules if I'm gonna to teach them. Even more so if they're noble brats. I can't have them half-assing a job you see. If you don't like that, I'm steppin' down from this adviser position. I won't be takin' responsibility for you guys."

She looked at me and Novem.

We nodded and asked about those rules.

"Understood. As long as it isn't something impossible."

"That so? Then first, don't complain about my advising method. I mean, listen to what I gots to say. Second, I'll be beatin' the basics into you guys in three months. Don't be picky with work. Third is…"

It was quite normal up to here. We waited for her to say what the third rule was.

"Third, is you gotta increase your numbers by one at least. It can be temporary, so become able to work in teams of at least three."

On hearing Zelphy-san's rule, Novem and I locked eyes.

There, Hawkins asserted a similar opinion.

"Quite right. If you've got three members, then it will be easier for us to find requests for you."

I hadn't been thinking about comrades. It was because I thought that as long as I was able to learn the basics, I would be able to carry out recruiting after that.

『Fumu, she looks to be thinking for your sake in her own way. We're also amateurs when it comes to being adventurers, so it would be best if you listened to her here.』

It wasn't because of the Third Generation's opinion or anything, but I decided to uphold the three terms.

"I understand your conditions. We have no objections."

As I said that, Zelphy-san smiled.

Rather than her overbearing expression, she was much more appealing as a woman when she smiled.

"Good! If that's so, I'll take the job. And wait, I was a tad startled when I heard I was teachin' newbies, but you're surprisingly obedient."

Novem asked Zelphy-san a question.

"Is that really something so rare?"

"It's usually different. Nobody generally has any money, so they honestly save it up before goin- to the mid-level advisers like us. They each pool about two to three gold and give a request to the guild. As long as they plan on rising in rank, most do request it, though."

Zelphy-san's view was supplemented by Hawkins-san.

"Here, we have a comparative abundance of work, and it's an easy place for freshly recruited adventurers to find jobs. That's why the Dalien adventurer guild has adopted such an adviser system."

"After getting to a point, it's easy to start getting worried about one's growth, so there're quite a few who want to push themselves, see? They first learn the foundation from some low-class adventurer, and come to a mid-class one like us when they think they're ready."

This system was only in place in a handful of branches, Dalien included, apparently.

You could also say it was a branch known for putting its power into training new recruits.

“Well, this is a little different from normal, but Zelphy-san is a seasoned veteran, who’s been an adventurer for twelve years. Her experience is abundant, and there isn’t an issue with her conduct. Please use her as reference, by all means… besides her manner of speech.”

As Hawkins-san said that, Zelphy-san raised an objection.

“I’m still in my twenties! Stop calling me a veteran, boss. It makes me sound old!”

“Well, please decide your plans for here on out in this room. Learn the necessary knowledge and experience of an adventurer from our veteran. I’ll be waiting for you all to become splendid adventurers.”

Hawkins-san leaves the room, seeing us off with a smile. Novem and I were left under the guidance of Zelphy-san.

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In the Guild’s meeting room, Zelphy-san gave us an idea of the necessities of an adventurer.

“… Well then, I’ve gone through all the basics, but the most important thing is comrades. You’ve gotta understand that. No matter how skilled a guy is, they’ll still make mistakes, so watch yourself.”

The general things were how to accept work at the guild and how to watch ourselves when we brought monsters and such into the guild building.

If you accepted a quest, and failed to complete it, it was recorded on your guild card. On it, your individual, as well as your party's request success rate, and record of problematic behavior was written.

Even when everything seemed normal, be wary.

Don't do what you're incapable of.

An adventurer shouldn't act adventurous.

We were taught things like that.

And in the end, she wrapped things up with the importance of comrades.

"Simple numbers can become power. When ruffians gather together, that in itself makes them stronger as a whole. Make sure ya' get that, okay?"

There, Novem raised a question.

"Um… quantity aside, shouldn't we be concerned about the quality?"

Zelphy-san shook her head.

"That depends where that quality's been assigned. Do you wanna make a strong guy with a lot of problematic behavior your comrade?"

I was unable to endorse such conduct, so I denied it.

"I don't want to."

But from the Jewel, the Third Generation…

『Tools and humans all have a way to use them.』

(Isn't this person's a little dark…)

"Right? Even if there be a problem with strength, based on the

contents of the request, it's often best to get some honest people."

Of course, that depends on where you intend to aim, she added.

"You could defeat monsters outside and sell them. You could accept requests and complete them. You could dive into a labyrinth and search for treasure. They're all an adventurer's job, but there are barely any individuals or parties who can do all of them, you know? Think closely of how you all plan on raking it in, and find comrades to fit that."

Where should we aim, and what are we lacking? Learning that is important.

Even if we have the necessary abilities, learning a specific craft could take too much time, so hiring a person with the necessary skillset and making them your comrade is a valid option.

"There's a limit to what a single person can do alone. It's fine to aim for first class, but if you misunderstand that fact, you'll make a grave mistake one day."

At the knowledge she pressed at us, Novem and I nodded.

"Good! Then let's talk business. Of course, it's quickest to learn these sort of things through experience."

Saying that, she presented a document she had prepared for us.

"Um… Zelphy-san?"

Novem seemed troubled.

"What's up?"

To a smiling Zelphy—san, Novem spoke.

"This page has 'Cleaning the City Drainage' written on it, but…"

"Yep, that's right! A person who refuses to accept requests like these will never accept one in their lives, so you should be getting' some

experience here while you have the chance.”

She was smiling, but I get the feeling her grin grew wider as she said that.

“Could it be you intend to break the rules I set already? Trust is important to adventurers too, you know.”

Our first job as an adventurer was to clean the drainage system.

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The meeting room in the Jewel.

When I had fallen asleep, I found the Sixth and Seventh Generations in opposition to my first job.

『As. I. Was. Saying! I won’t let Lyle do something like sewer cleaning! Look here, even if you stick on ‘former,’ he’s the heir to the Walt House, isn’t he? Fifth Generation, why not say something here?』

The Sixth had a wild look to him, and the generations to follow evaluated him as a scoundrel, so he didn’t really hold a good image in my mind.

My grandfather, the Seventh Generation, agreed with him.

『You all are fine with having Lyle do something like that!?』

But the First and Fourth didn’t seem to have any interest. More than that…

『Why not? As long as Novem-chan’s not dirtied, there’s no problem.』

The point the First Generation was interested in was whether Novem

would get injured or sullied during the cleaning. I'm also a man

I'll make sure I'm the one getting heavily dirtied and have Novem help me indirectly. Zelphy-san also said she gave a high evaluation to a man who looked out for a woman.

Of course, it was also the ancestors' opinion.

『Well, since we have the chance, it's best to let Lyle learn a bit about the world. In all honesty, I think that adventurer called Zelphy is on to something there.』

The Second gave an appraisal of Zelphy-san.

But the Sixth Generation was different.

『Even if you stick on a 'former,' you can call Lyle a noble, can't you!? Unlike you guys, Lyle's a real among reals! A bona fide noble!』

To the Sixth Generation, who was quite worked up, the Third spoke.

『Why are you treating us as fakes~? Just what's your difference between real and fake?』

The Fourth was the same.

Only the Fifth didn't seem all too interested in it. And wait, that Fifth seems to take a neutral stance no matter what happens.

The Seventh started to divulge my lineage.

『Lyle carries the blood of my wife, the blood of a Count's House! Listen here, to put it simply, he's a child who carries the blood of a Royal family that predates the Sentras Kingdom before ours!』

『… Well you just dropped quite a bomb there.』

The fact the Third Generation referred to as explosive…

"Eh? That's the first I'm hearing of this."

Was something even I didn't know. The area started getting a little noisy.

The Third Generation looked at me, as he sought confirmation from the Sixth.

『… It seems the boy in question had no idea about it. You sure?』

Hearing that, I also nodded.

"I never heard anything like that from father."

Of course, I was ignored at age ten and onwards. It may just be that my dad never brought up something as important as that.

『There are truths not to be revealed on the surface! In our time, the former royal family sought reinstatement and took advantage of the corrupt politics of the era to stir up a rebellion!』

The Third Generation participated in a war with another country and died in battle.

But henceforth, the Walt House's head often headed out into battle, even if it be for a small scale skirmish.

Among them, the Sixth and Seventh were part of a generation that participated in skirmishes, internal discord, and even wars with foreign lands.

The situation has died down as of late, but I heard stories of my father going out to war as well in his younger days.

The Seventh Generation started explaining about my grandmother.

『The old monarchy… Sentras' royal blood is, and this goes without saying, also carried by the current line. But they couldn't reveal that it was still being passed down on the surface. I mean, the surviving clan was the bloodline of the one who started the rebellion, 【Agrissa】's descendants.』

Agrissa… she was the one the First Generation spoke of, the last queen of the Sentras Kingdom, and quite a beauty.

“Eh? Grandmother… if grandma【Zenoire】 was someone like that, then…”

A vixen, and one who was still heralded as beautiful to this day. The individual who monopolized the favor of the King. Meaning Agrissa’s descendants are a direct line from that old monarchy.

『Uwah… Celles is sounding more and more like a Monster.』

The First Generation gave his opinion, but the Second seemed fed up with him.

『You’re still saying something like that?』

The Seventh continued his explanations.

『Bahnseim royalty stems from a distant relative, but there is a limited number of those who hold their high-class blood. And one of them is Lyle… understand?』

The Sixth started to explain why they couldn’t eradicate the old monarchy’s bloodline.

On the surface, it looked like the rebellion was a success, and they were all executed. All that survived as a small clan that that was exiled from the crown.

“Um, I was taught the survivors of the old crown were just distant relatives, though? I was sure they were all executed.”

『Fool! As if you can crush a royal bloodline that’s polished itself over its long history! They were disposed on the surface, and the survivors were sheltered in some way or another.』

As Magicians are nobles, their blood is what links them all. From someone with magic, you can produce magicians.

As a result, the monarchy was born.

When they fell to ruin, and society was reborn from the ashes, what remained was blood.

『The King of my generation, if nothing had happened, he would have had Zenoire adopted off to some high-class House, and have welcomed her into the royal family with open arms. But his corrupt politics spurred the anger of some relatives, and they leapt to their feet… the conflict that followed even dragged other countries into the midst!』

From there on, the Seventh went into a dark story.

Everyone listened… no, they pretended not to hear it. I had a vague idea about most of it already, so I left him and went back to the other ancestors.

"So what were we talking about again?"

The Fourth Generation pushed up his glasses with one finger and got us back on track.

『It was about drainage cleaning. But from there, we've ventured into something quite grand. And wait, I'm surprised the Walt House got royal blood into it.』

The Third was of the same opinion.

『Precisely. Even so, I wonder why Lyle's Mana reserve is so pitifully low.』

"That's because you guys are too rowdy, isn't it!? I'll just throw this out there, but I was on the higher side for those of my age! Even so, the Jewel is sucking out my Mana entirely…"

The conversation derails again, and the Fifth give a sigh as he added his input.

Everyone around us seemed fed up.

『Don't get so heated over sewer cleaning.』

『B-but still, Fifth Generation…』

Perhaps because he was his father, the Sixth couldn't offer a strong response to the Fifth. It was as if the First and Second's relationship had been turned on its head.

『Regardless of whether he's royal blood or not, at the moment, he's an adventurer who's been driven out of his home. If the adventurer adviser wants to make Lyle clean gutters, then isn't that fine? Rather than that, I'm just happy he wasn't asked to commit a crime or anything.』

The Seventh tried to refute him.

『H-however, Lyle's standing is…』

『And I'm saying his current standing is as an adventurer. It'll be a good experience. For his sake, it'll be all positives and no lasting negatives.』

Hearing that, the First Generation nodded.

It was just the Second who was struggling to catch up to the change of the situation.

『I never imagined my descendants would be a bearers of royal lineage. And wait, for this barbarian to have royalty in his bloodline…』

『You say something?』

As the pelt-clad barbarian directed his eyes at the Second Generation, the Second shook his head.

『Then Lyle's drainage cleaning will be carried out as planned.』

(I wonder why cleaning is becoming so large of a fuss.)

Unsatisfied, the Sixth and Seventh offered some complaints.

『Just how much troubles do you think we went through…』

『Zenoire, I'm sorry…』

The others didn't seem all too interested. More than that, the fact that royal blood had entered their lineage was more important to them.

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The next day.

From early morning, I put myself to cleaning out Dalien's drainage.

To put it bluntly, it was filthy. There was garbage littered everywhere, and in the worst case, even excrement…

"T-this is rough…"

I wore a cloth over my mouth and appropriate work clothes for garbage disposal.

"Lyle-sama, it's already noon. I'll switch in."

"… The sentiment is enough."

Novem worried for me, and told us to switch jobs. But I can't have Novem doing something like this.

More than that, there was a bigger problem…

『Yeah, yeah, is that supposed to be the product of royal blood!? Put your hips into it as you work!』

The First Generation was overly energetic and noisy.

『The Walt House is royalty… I thought just reaching Counthood was too good to be true…』

The Second mumbled, while lost in thought.

『More importantly, why did the Seventh Generation get to marry a girl like that Zenoire chick? I still don't see how it was necessary.』

The Third wanted to know just why the Royal Blood got in.

『Ah, that's what I was wondering too. You could've just married into the standing monarchy. I don't think any good'll come of extending your reach farther than need be.』

The Fourth didn't seem to have any interest in me. All four of them seemed to be fine with me working as long as Novem didn't dirty herself.

『There were different circumstances than back in your guys' time. Unless the scope was large, we would've been dragged into something troublesome whether we liked it or not.』

On the Fifth's rather philosophical approach, the Sixth voiced his approval.

『The political stage was a mess. If we tried closing ourselves in and not flaunting our forces, then it wasn't strange for a reason to be fabricated for our subjugation back in those days.』

It was apparently quite a troubling era, based on the Sixth's grumblings.

『Our Lyle would have married into royalty too. Or perhaps he would have met the king's daughter and elevated us to a Marquis House. If his environment didn't stick their hands into it, it should've gone like that…』

It looks like the Seventh had such expectations of me.

And wait, grandma Zenoire was also an individual who cleared all the Walt House Precepts.

During the internal discord, she was to be disposed of, and the Seventh offered her shelter indefinitely, apparently.

Thinking that, I was reminded of how convenient it was that our House was in a remote region of the kingdom.

(Putting that aside… quiet down, you all!)

My breathing was starting to get rough.

There wasn't a problem with my physical stamina, but my mental fatigue was surfacing.

Obviously, it was all because this damn Jewel was continuing to eat up my Mana!

Advisor Zelphy-san seemed slightly disheartened as she looked at me.

"You've got even less stamina than I thought. At this rate, it was gonna be a long time before you even think of going out to subjugate monsters. Let's keep on taking up requests like this as a means of training."

"Eh, no… if possible, I'd like to start hunting monsters as soon as possible…"

I tried to oppose Zelphy-san's opinion, but Novem agreed with her.

"That's right. It's not right for us to push ourselves, and more than anything, Lyle-sama's safety is first and foremost. These sorts of jobs are an experience in themselves, and I'll also try my best."

As Novem declared her participation, the Jewel was astir.

『Stop her! Novem-chan doesn't have to do something like that!』

『Lyle, on with it! You're worrying Novem-chan!』

『As expected of sis' descendant. She's well built. But of all else, I don't want her doing a job like this.』

『Show your guts! In front of a woman, it's only natural for a man to do the impossible!』

First, Second, Third, Fourth…

(I-it's because you guys are so noisy…)

But it didn't end there.

『You plan on making him do even more!? That's more than enough! What meaning is there in having him continue jobs like this!?』

『Calm down. He'll stay safe, so on the contrary, I welcome it.』

The Sixth and Fifth took control.

『Why did something like this… as I thought, I have to smack that useless son of mine! Also, don't act up so much, you all! You're making it worse for Lyle!』

The Seventh was also quite worked up.

I'm happy that he'd gotten angry for my sake. But still, I'd like to say it.

(Please just be quiet!!)

It was just simple drainage cleaning, but because of my ancestors, the difficulty level rose quite a bit.

Chapter 08 - An Adventurer Shouldn't be Adventurous

An adventurer shouldn't be adventurous.

While those words may sound contradictory, they're often held as correct.

In all truth, in jobs where your life was at stake, it was important to take measures to reduce the danger.

All or nothing gambles were taboo to those in life-threatening occupations.

My start as an adventurer was truly steady.

It was so steady that I had started to hate it.

"I-I've finished."

One week. Since I became an adventurer, it has been a week since I came under Zelphy-san's guidance.

And yet even now, I was still doing odd jobs within the city limits of Dalien.

Novem would get worried and try to help with my jobs, so I asked Zelphy-san to leave other requests to her.

Things anyone could do. Safe jobs like desk work.

Novem hails from a patriarchal family. Perhaps because she was disciplined quite strictly, she excelled in reading and writing without issue.

She could do calculations, and she was quite used to documents.

When I was out doing a job, she was taking on amanuensis requests. (ED: Wow this word… basically, a secretary.)

As such, I was currently in the middle of repairing the wall that surrounded the city.

Without using magic, I was carrying blocks of stone.

Using magic would probably make this all easier, but just the fact that I was holding the Jewel gave me a restriction on how much I could expend.

(What's more, they even told me hastening my workload with magic was no good… well, it's not like I don't understand their reasoning.)

The ancestors forbade me from optimizing my work with magic. Besides building up my body, there was also a reason for this.

Of course, it was also a reason unrelated to me.

"Yep, I guess it's passable? With this, your job evaluation is certain to be a B or higher."

"Hah, hah, is that so?"

Through physical labor, I practiced the art of training my body as I worked.

Even now, with that drainage cleaning incident from before, Zelphy-san's evaluation of me is low.

But in this one week, I get the feeling I've gained an understanding of what it means to accept work in the city.

"It may be a little soon, but take a break tomorrow. I'll be having you out and slaying monsters afterwards."

"A-at last?"

I was quite worn out, but hearing that gave me some relief. If I spent too much time doing jobs like this, I can't tell what the First Generation would say to me.

And there was also the dissatisfaction that had been building up in the

Sixth and Seventh.

“Make preparations just as I told you, okay? If you’re not ready yet, then use tomorrow to get yourself together and rest your body. Also, make sure to get some light exercise.

“Understood.”

“Obedient kids sure are easy to handle. You guys’ weapon choice was a Sabre for yourself, and a Staff for Novem, right?”

Zelphy-san confirmed, and I nodded.

She put her hand to her chin and thought for a bit. After that, she nodded to herself a few times.

“Lyle, you should be carryin’ a reserve weapon. It can be a Sabre like the other one, but a dagger works all the same. If possible, I’d like you to change your weapon preferences, but I won’t force you to do anythin’.”

The weapon I favored called a Sable was capable of both thrusting and slashing.

On the other hand, its blade was thin, so it had the demerit of being easy to bend and snap the metal.

If it was a normal sword, then even if the blade broke, it was a competent blunt weapon. More so, it would often be used as a blunt weapon regardless.

Its reach was also short, so if you looked at it from an objective standpoint, something like a spear would be superior.

“Do you mean something like a lance? I can use one to some extent.”

“More than that, I’d like you to carry a shield on you. If I determine that it’s dangerous, I’ll lend a hand, but I’ll generally be havin’ you two take out the small fries.”

The area around the city, due to the presence of adventurers, was

relatively safe. There were also soldiers, and if possible, they would subjugate any particularly dangerous monsters themselves.

They even send out night brigades on occasion.

For that, the city's circumference was characterized by its abundance of small fries, and powerful monsters were a rare find. I won't say there were none, though.

"A Shield, is it… I can use one, but I don't have one on me. Should I buy a cheap one?"

"Are you the type that's got no particular weapon preferences? It's fine to go buy reserve arms, but think hard about what weapon you want. There's no need for you to push yourself to buy somethin' expensive, and based on the situation, there are times when such things may prove absolutely useless."

There were many adventurers who learn to use a variety of weapons, and changed their equipment based on the fight ahead.

More so, even with changing times, that sort of trend was preferred.

But, it has also been said that using a single weapon, and honing your skills with it, is the shortcut to becoming first class.

It all depended on the person.

"… How about I keep a sabre for now, and keep a dagger and buckler on me?"

As I said that, I heard a voice from the Jewel.

It was the Second Generation.

『Lyle, I think you ought to pick out your arms based on the quest.』

But the Third offered a rebuttal.

『I think you should set your Sabre as your reserve weapon. That

way, you have a usable alternative on hand if your unaccustomed weapon's crushed.』

Finally, the first…

『Does it really matter that much, if it's just the small fries lying around, your bare hands are more than enough, right?』

(At least consolidate your opinions before speaking up…)

Even though I thought that, I definitely wasn't at fault here.

"I'll leave your equipment matters to you. It's just around the city, so there's not that much of a need to worry about it. At the start, it's best to go forth with weapons you're used to."

After that, the work-site supervisor confirmed my work, and we received documents pertaining to my evaluation before Zelphy-san and I headed to the guild.

In the end, I was covered in sweat, but since I wasn't bloody, Zelphy-san told me there was no need for me to use the baths.

"Get over to your girl quickly."

"Uu… yes."

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We headed to the guild's second floor and handed over the documents to Hawkins-san.

As always, the man's counter wasn't crowded, so we were smoothly able to deliver them.

In comparison, the beauty had formed quite a line.

“She’s as popular as ever. And wait, are you sure that ain’t a problem in itself, boss?”

On Zelphy-san’s question, Hawkins-san answered as he looked over the documentation.

“In the past, we once tried to take her off the receptions counter. However, the amount of adventurers who requested for her was just too great, so we returned her.”

As I thought, Dalien’s adventurer’s guild was quite popular.

“Wasn’t she put up front because she wasn’t competent at the more complicated work? I heard that kid’s parents were high up in the Guild’s management, though.”

“I can’t answer that one.”

While exchanging dialogue with Zelphy-san, Hawkins-san handed over my reward.

The report he handed back had the evaluation of my work during this job.

The site foreman said my work ethic was 『Good』, and gave me an overall of 『B』. It was just as Zelphy-san said.

Of course, in cases where an 『A』 was awarded, the client had to add on an additional reward. Because of that, A Rank evaluations were rarely given out.

With miscellaneous ordinary jobs like this, the highest to expect was a 『B』.

“With this, the amount of requests you’ve completed is twelve. They were all evaluated either 『C』 or 『B』, so please keep at it with that spirit.”

Hawkins-san smiled as he said that. I accepted the reward.

Eight large copper coins.

If you looked at it as a whole day's earnings, it was quite low. After working from dawn to dusk, a normal civilian would have made more than ten.

"Thank you very much."

I put the money in my wallet.

Zelphy-san was an adviser. Because of that, she wasn't paid a reward from these. Of course, she had accepted four gold coins prior.

After she completed her service, she would receive four more, and based on how we turned out, she would possibly earn another one. The final gold coin was probably something like the guild's referral fee.

"It's about time we let them get out of the city. They've learned what they have to on odd jobs, and no matter what happens, they should be able to manage. In truth, it seems that even Lyle here doesn't have a problem with the three Rs."

(TL: You know, the ones where only one of them starts with an R.)

Zelphy-san said that to Hawkins-san.

Hearing that, he looked a little regretful.

"That's surprisingly fast."

"They've already paid my fee. If we don't sent them out soon, they're not going to get their money's worth in results. Is there a problem?"

"No, Novem-san is diligent in her work. She's quite quick and polite. She's even getting some amanuensis work from the higher ups, and her evaluation remains favorable."

It looks like Novem had quite a high work evaluation.

From the start, her handwriting was clean, and it looked like Hawkins-san remembered that. That was why he referred her to scribal work.

In a partitioned room where she wouldn't have to face people, she wrote letters and the such based on their requests.

Even if others couldn't see her face, she earned herself quite a reputation based on her voice and conduct.

"If it's by your referral boss, even if it's not as an adventurer, she could get hired onto the guild's staff. If she gets injured, then you could just get her a job here."

"Ahaha, while I'd be more than happy to take her on, having her injured wouldn't be for the best. Lyle-kun, you must be sure to be careful."

"Ah, yes."

After the paperwork was finished, Hawkins-san went around back and called out Novem. After a while, she appeared from the employee-only exit.

"Lyle-sama."

She waved at me with a smile, and I lightly raised my hand to answer her.

『Well then~ today's Novem-chan's as cute as ever… Why don't you at least learn to be able to give a compliment or two, Lyle?』

(Fourth Generation, please shut up.)

To Novem, who had wandered up, Zelpy-san explained tomorrow's plans.

"Novem, tomorrow, you should rest your body. The day after, I'm going to have you go out of the city and experience battlin' monsters. You're prepared for it, right? Well, if you're not, then you're gettin' a lecture an' some more odd jobs."

“Yes, Zelphy-san.”

After confirming our plans, we separated from Zelphy-san.

As an adviser, she apparently had to regularly submit a journal to the guild. An adviser’s job seems to be a pain in itself, in various ways.

“I guess we should return.”

“Right. Let’s do some shopping, and go back.”

“Yeah, if you plan on shopping, I have today’s earnings, so I’ll pay.”

“Really? How much did you make today?”

“Eight large copper coins! How about you?”

“… Six large coppers.”

We left the reception room and had a little conversation as we descended the stairs.

I didn’t think anything of it. However, the ancestors seemed to have figured something out…

『She sure is a good girl… purposely saying it was less to prop up her man. Even so, Lyle won’t say a single compliment.』

Getting fed up with the Fourth Generation’s cut-ins, I tried complimenting her.

“Hawkins-san spoke highly of you. He said you were fast and polite with your work… well, I’m happy for you.”

I had put all my effort into saying that, but the ancestors were quite harsh.

Starting with the First Generation…

『Zero points.』

『Ten points.』
『Well~ you were tactless about it, so thirty points.』
『Zero.』
『Eh? Me too? … Then fifteen points.』
『You're all quite harsh, aren't you. Ah, thirty points.』
『I'm sorry, Lyle… twenty points.』

(Don't be giving me a grade! Even I knew it was dicey the moment after I said it!)

But Novem looked happy at my dicey way of complimenting.

A smile took hold of her face, and she thanked to me.

"Thank you very much. But I think that you're having a harder time working outside, Lyle-sama."

"Eh, um… t-that isn't necessarily the case."

As I was beginning to feel nervous, the Jewel shouted for me to get myself together.

Together, we headed for the bath house adjacent to the guild, and after washing off our sweat, we headed out for shopping.

… On a later date, when I tried asking Hawkins-san what her earning were for this day, he said it was nine large copper.

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Our first rest day in a while.

Since coming to Dalien, my time had mostly been occupied with odd jobs and physical labor, so I didn't have much time to spare.

But using this break, the two of us have things we have to do.

That was heading to the realtor.

“How about it? This apartment is popular among adventurers. It has three rooms, and more than anything, it even has a toilet and bath installed.”

The young salesperson at the real estate agency referred us to the properties in his possession.

I, myself, wanted to choose one as soon as possible. But Novem proceeded with caution.

“About how high would the price be?”

“Let’s see… there’s a down payment of six silver coins, and after that, there’s a charge of fifty large copper per month. I believe it’s quite a moderate pricing, madam.”

“… Can you show us the next option?”

(Eh? You want to see more?)

That was already the fourth, but Novem continued to look for a different apartment. Our criteria was that it be close to the guild.

Near the guild was a place that ordinary people were reluctant to live, so there was apparently a lot of complexes dedicated to housing for adventurers.

“This one’s a true steal, miss. One silver down, and a monthly of thirty five large copper!”

While the employee was recommending it, I did get the feeling it was relatively cheap and suitable for our purposes. It was just me and Novem, so it would be fine even if it was narrow, I think.

But Novem seemed dissatisfied as she earnestly looked around the room.

I heard a voice from the Jewel as well.

『I think you should give this one up.』

It was the Second's voice. Recently, it looked like they've been breaking the rules. Thinking about my own sake, I think it would be best if they could keep to themselves as best as they can, but even so, all those besides the Fifth seem to speak up quite a bit.

In a small voice, I asked.

"Why is that?"

『Just a feeling, but it's quite an ominous feeling at that. If it's here, then even the previous place's better. And wait, the wallpaper looks like it's been replaced, right… that part right there, especially, looks suspicious.』

The Third Generation's opinion was just a feeling.

"Um, well… this place is a little unpleasant, I guess?"

I believed in the Third's senses, and raised an objection. Novem agreed with me.

"That's right. Could you let us see the other properties?"

"… Understood. (Hah, as I thought, it's still noticeable…)"

I heard the sales rep say something in a small voice, and I was a little curious about what exactly was being hidden, but at the same time, I felt I was better off not knowing.

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In the end, we didn't end up moving into an apartment.

With Novem's decision, and the the regulations of the ancestors, what we ended up in wasn't an apartment, but a house.

It was a house for rent, but it was also relatively wide.

It required some repairs, but its down payment was eight silver, and its monthly was sixty five large copper. It was large, and if we did some work on it, it looked like it would turn out to be quite a nice place.

There weren't many houses in the neighborhood, and… there wasn't an atmosphere that suggested that there would be any more. On the contrary, it looked like the numbers would decrease.

"It was a limited time offer, but with two years, we may very well move in that time period. It's perfect for our purposes, right, Lyle-sama?"

"Y-yeah… but the apartments were closer to the guild, and I get the feeling that would have worked just as well, though."

We barely brought any luggage with us, so our move ended in an instant.
We could've left the cleaning to a contractor, but as it was our house now, we started cleaning it for ourselves.

This was an area scheduled for redevelopment, and in two years, this house was set to be demolished.

Because of that, there wasn't much around us.

I won't say there was nothing, but considering the scope of Dalien's growth, it was quite a lonely residential area. Once redevelopment ends, I wonder just what will become of this place.

"It looks like the people in our neighborhood are adventurers as well. I believe they were thinking the same thing."

Right, what was more, this area has a high adventurer ratio.

Because of the limited-time availability, the properties were clearly

cheaper than their value.

There was both a bath and toilet, and we had obtained quite a vast house. I've no complaints. But the reason the ancestors chose this place was a little…

『If it's here, then no matter how loud you scream, you guys won't bother the neighbors!』

That.

Among them, my marriage to Novem was already set in stone. To summarize, they chose this place with the intentions of getting us to act like a married couple already.

(Do you think I could do something like that when you guys are constantly watching me!?)

Chapter 09 - Lyle's Ability

After finishing our preparations to venture outside the city, we headed towards the guild.

Generally, it's a standard practice to give a report to the guild whenever you plan on going outside. Of course, there was a reason.

It's for the guild to keep tabs on where adventurers were and what they were doing. At the same time, in cases where one didn't return far past the designated time, they would take action based on the assumption that something had happened to you.

We met up with Zelphy-san, but instead of her usual easy-to-move-in clothes, she was wearing a leather-based armor.

She held a sword and shield she seem accustomed to, and based on appearance, she looked like a knight.

"Right on time, or perhaps a little early… well, so be it."

Zelphy-san praised us and accompanied us to the guild's second floor. We filled out a blank form and took it over to the receptions desk.

The one in charge of our counter was Hawkins-san.

"… Accepted. Make sure you come back in a timely manner. If there's a change in your plans… well, that probably won't happen, but if you're too late, the guild may send out a search party for you."

Hawkins looked worried, but we had Zelphy-san accompanying us. It was out of the question for us to become negligent through our peace of mind, but still, we had an adviser with us.

We probably won't get into too serious a situation.

"Today, we'll just get them to grasp the flow of things. Havin' you two return alive is written in my contract."

“Adventurers must always adhere to contracts, was it?”

As I said that, she nodded.

Adventurers were one thing, but that tendency was strong among mercenaries. I mean, having one that breaks contracts creates quite a great problem of trust.

For that, Zelphy-san taught us to carefully confirm the contents of our requests.

“It’s an important thing as a human. Don’t break your promises, kids.”

As she said that, Hawkins-san let out a sigh.

“Well, it’s troubling for us because there are quite a lot of people who fail to do so. Now then, please try your best. As an adventurer, for one to live by the trade, it has to be monster hunting, right?”

“Then we’ll be off.”

With those words, we departed from the guild.

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Outside of Dalien.

We exited through the walls which were about four meters high and walked along the highway.

We made sure not to get in the way of the carts and merchants going to and fro, and we occasionally exchanged greetings with those we passed by.

“You both have more than enough medicine, right?”

“Yes.”

As I nodded, Zelphy called out to a slightly dirty traveler on the road.

“What happened? You’ve got yourself quite muddied up there.”

When asked, the traveler explained his circumstances.

“I dunno, man. I went off the path for a bit to do my business, and a slime went and attacked me. I was able to block with my robe, but I got a bit burnt up.”

A slime was a type of monster that existed as a nucleus and liquid within a transparent membrane. It jumped at living things and preyed upon them by dissolving them into its liquid.

But it didn’t possess much intelligence, so if you approached it, it would attack, but if you didn’t, it wouldn’t do anything.

They appear en masse, and they were a troublesome sort of monster that brought harm to merchants, horses that pull the carts of travelers, and the like.

“I see. Here, use this.”

To the traveler who showed off his burnt robe and reddened arms, Zelphy-san tossed some medicine. It was a cheap one, but I wonder if it was alright to part with it so easily.

“Sorry ‘bout that. Distance-wise, it’s about two kilos down the road, and from this direction, they were in a thicket on the right. I guess there were quite a few in the area?”

After receiving the information, Zelphy-san waved her hand and parted with the adventurer.

“What was that just now?”

“Folks who are used to travel understand our circumstances, kid. So as

compensation, he paid me with information. I'll bet there are some who would lie as well, but it's a road they use for themselves, so they'll give quite a bit of information to an adventurer out monster hunting."

Then wouldn't he have just told you free of charge? I thought that, but Zelphy gave a broad grin.

"Lyle, remember this. Humans work more when there's a reward. The amount of info you get is the same."

"Is… that so? It's for their own profit, isn't it?"

From my point of view, I don't get why they'd be stingy with information even when it would benefit them.

"Of course, there are some who think that way as well. But as with everything, that's not everyone. You've got to study more about the world."

With that, we started heading towards the place we were pointed to.

I had the reserve sabre I bought on me as well, so I wasn't worried about my equipment. Also, today's opponent was a slime.

If they had the necessary know-how, it was an opponent even a civilian could dispatch.

"Oh? Just at the right time. Both of you, see those three adventurers over there? Look at them while you walk."

Hearing that, I turned my head to see a three-man party wielding knives and wearing light-weight… civilian clothes.

Even if their opponent was a slime, their mismatched movements showed they had no coordination.

"Are those men novices?"

On Novem's question, Zelphy offered a slight correction.

“Novices they are. Their equipment’s no good. But it’s not rare to be havin’ trouble with a slime. Even if it’s wide-spread that as long as they had a weapon, anyone could beat one…”

Within that, the First Generation inserted himself into the conversation.

『I just took them on with the branches lying around, though. If I brought over the magic stones in their skin and core, the old man at the guild would give me candy. Back when I was small, that’s how I would get my snacks, you know? Well, it’s probably impossible for a frail kid like you.』

It seemed like he was trying to provoke me, but all I thought was…

(You were being cheated there, you know, First Generation.)

I found it a little pitiful. Probably because he was too young to notice, they sure made good use of him.

(And wait, defeating monsters at a young age; just how much of a savage are you?)

But unable to restrain himself, the Second raised a loud laugh as he paraded around the fact.

Just when I had decided to keep it to myself, it looks like my kindness had no meaning.

『Gyahahaha! Candy in exchange for monster materials, you say? Just how much were they ripping you off!? Ah, my stomach’s starting to hurt~.』
『W-what!?』
『Even in my time, it was several coppers. You could have bags worth of candy with that.』

The Second Generation truly seemed to be having fun as he mocked the first.

(Just what happened between those two?)

Among the Walt House ancestors, the Second Generation was remarkably plain. But there was definitely something deep rooted between those two.

Of course, I do have a general idea of it.

『That damn geezer! He's got a good whopping coming to 'im!』
『I'm pretty sure he's already dead.』

The Third Generation called quits, and the conversation ended there. That wasn't the case on my side, though.

"… Hey, Lyle, are you even listening?"

"Lyle-sama?"

"Ah, no… I'm sorry."

I had given too much attention to the ancestors' conversation, and I had forgotten Zelphy-san. With a tired bearing, she let out a sigh.

"Hah, then here it is again. No matter how weak they are, if you get hit, it'll hurt. Also, that's even more so when they're usin' a short reach weapon like a knife. That's why their hips are buckling in fear. If they surrounded it to attack, it'd be much more efficient, but they're so confused they haven't noticed that; another of their problems."

Novem looked over at the party of three as she posed a question.

"Are you sure you don't want to notify them?"

"Why? I'm you guys' advisor. I've already received the money, the responsibility, and the obligation. I've got nothin' towards those guys over there. Will you go tell them, Novem? If you do, I won't stop you. It's just that…"

"Just that?"

I was curious as to what she was going to say.

“Those three should take this opportunity to learn it. Learn pain. Unlike you guys, they haven’t realized they need someone to teach them, and that their assets weren’t enough to put together good enough equipment. All the more so.”

“… That’s right.”

Novem seemed satisfied with that answer.

But she turned her head multiple times to look at the three. They looked injured, but they had safely beaten the slime.

While complaining about the pain, they collected the Slime’s materials.

I also looked at them.

“You think we were cold?”

“No, well… a little.”

As I gave an honest answer, Zelphy-san smiled. ‘How honest,’ she said, as she offered an explanation.

“Even if an adventurer challenges a monster and dies, it’s his own responsibility. More so if they idiotically over assess their own strengths, and go against a stronger one. Idiots like that’ll just repeat the same thin’ if you save them. Even if you stop them from fightin’ monsters, they’ll still be idiots.”

Idiots like that were scary, she said.

“Also, if you keep bein’ sweet on them, there are many who become conceited. Especially in a lower-class job like adventurin’, it’s not rare at all.”

(Like they’ll say not to stick your nose into other people’s business?)

“Even if they’re not all like that, there’s no way we can extend our

hand to all of them either, is what you're saying?"

As Novem voiced her understanding, Zelphy-san told her she was half correct.

"Savin' them is easy. But can you look after someone you've saved forever? Even if we saved them back there, they could just launch a repeat of the exact same thing. If they were of a little worse disposition, they may even delude themselves to thinkin' someone nearby would save them when something dangerous happened… and so, when they're not goin' to die or anything, it's best to get them to know pain."

As she said that, the Second Generation approved.

『Rather than giving them bread, teach them how to cultivate wheat. Truly, there are plenty who would become rotten themselves if all they did was receive bread.』

"Well, if you want me to put it simply, you guys are amateurs. You're not on the savin' side, but on the saved side… no, you're on the side that's still being saved. If you want to save them, then you've got to become first class as soon as you can."

Saying that, Zelphy-san quieted up and continued to walk towards our destination.

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When we arrived at the place the traveler spoke of, we definitely found some slimes.

Based on what I could see alone, I was able to confirm five of them.

Their muddy, pea-green, wobbling fluid sloshed around as their bodies creeped across the ground. Within their masses, a core-like, red, spherical item was vaguely visible.

“Fumu, he said it was a thicket, but it’s closer to a forest. We don’t want to chase them too far, so… ah, there’s one.”

As she said that, Zelphy-san picked up a rock littered around the ground.

After tossing it upwards a few times, she lobbed it at a slime.

The slime it hit’s movements became flurried.

It started heading in our direction.

“I’m surprised it can tell where we are without eyes or ears.”

I took out my sabre, and Zelphy-san took a stance with her sword and shield. Novem held her staff aloft.

“You’re both quite nervous. Aren’t your bodies a bit too stiff? I’ll show you the basics, so watch closely.”

With that, Zelphy-san went at the slime that was heading towards her… no, that had been heading towards her.

From the spot she had thrown the stone, she moved ever-so-slightly. But with just that motion, the slime propelled itself at the space she had occupied before.

That’s all that happened, but with ample leisure, Zelphy-san cut through it as it came.

“If you approach it, it can’t sense footsteps or vibrations, but still, it’ll notice you, so make sure to take it out in a single hit.”

As the sword pierced the slime’s flesh, liquid started to burst out of it.

After a while, the creature’s movement’s stopped, and she called Novem over.

“Novem, come here.”

“Y-yes!”

“Calm down. Take out the cask.”

Novem handed over the small barrel that was being sold on the guild’s first floor.

Taking out a knife, Zelphy-san discarded the muddy liquid, and used her knife to open up the skin.

From it, the core and other magic stones fall, and she put those in a separate bag.

Into the barrel, she put the skin, and something sticky that was over its surface.

“And that’s how ya’ do it. Generally, you got to keep wary of your surroundings when you collect materials. Or the other members are supposed to keep watch for you, right?”

She looked towards me, so I hurriedly offered an apology. But she grinned, and told me not to mind it too much.

“Be careful next time. You saw what you’re supposed to collect, right? You’ll be doing that later, but make sure you don’t use the gloves you use for collection for anything else.

Hearing her warning, we went to imitate Zelphy-san by picking up rocks.

“Novem should use a knife or borrow a sabre from Lyle. If you beat them with blunt force, they’ll burst, so that’d be a pain.”

“Yes. Lyle-sama, could I borrow a sabre?”

When Novem had just finished saying that, Zelphy-san suddenly raised her voice.

“Both of you, fall back!”

She had suddenly shouted at us, but I heard a voice from the Jewel as well.

It was the First Generation's voice.

『Get behind the lady adventurer immediately! No, make sure you protect Novem-chan too! It's goblins!』

Goblin.

A monster boasting a large face and green skin. Their height was less than two thirds a grown man's, but unbefitting their slender frame and limbs, they were relatively strong.

Among monsters, they were one of the weaker ones, but they were categorized as a troublesome race.

The reason being, they were weak when standing alone, but in groups… in legions… what was more, they held weapons.

A certain scholar once wrote that if Goblins just had a little more wisdom, then the world would have fallen to their reign long ago.

From the thicket…

A goblin came equipped with a bow, and another leapt out with a make-shift blunt weapon consisting of a branch with a rock fastened to the end.

Before the rear one could fire an arrow, Zelphy-san swiftly rushed in and blocked it. She shouted for us to fall back.

The First's opinion was the same.

"Both of you retreat and await further orders! I'll take these buggers out."

『You won't be able to win. Just shut it and listen to the lady. These guys don't have too much brute strength, but they push through with

numbers.』

It was just as the First said.

From the thicket, seven more goblins emerged.

But…

『What are you talking about? Show them how it's done, Lyle.』

Having been told by the Seventh, I directed the tip of my blade at the goblin brigade. Zelphy-san was there as well, so I called out to her.

"Zelphy-san, don't move for a second."

"What are you…"

While Zelphy-san was dealing with them, I prepared to use magic.

Right now, the Jewel was stealing away my Mana.

Considering my mana, and the amount of enemies, one spell was my limit here. Truly, there was no helping it if they tell me this wasn't at a level where I could use it in real combat.

『Oy, idiot! It's impossible for…』

The First shouted, but I still chanted.

(If I want to take out these numbers all at once, then…)

"Lightning."

Lightning attribute magic rained down on the goblins rushing at Zelphy-san.

Time to activate, scope, and output.

Considering all of those, it really wasn't at a level to put to practical use, I guess.

The goblins were electrocuted, and sparks flew around them. I took distance into account in my calculations, so Zelphy-san wasn't drawn into it.

It's just that.

"I failed to kill one of them."

After taking a look at me, one of the goblins in front of Zelphy-san fled.

It appears the magic did hit it, but it was only grazed. Its arms were charred black.

Thinking me a threat, the goblin ran in despair.

Zelphy-san was mildly dumbfound, but seeing its movements, she immediately reacted.

With a single stroke, she finished it off.

As I thought, she has skill fitting for her to be a guild adviser.

"… Oy, oy, was that lightning attribute? So you were a magician?"

"I did report that, didn't I?"

"No, well, you did. Still, magic like that one from before was outside of my expectations. Even I can use a few spells, but if someone asked if I could shoot one at that level, I'd reply 'no' immediately."

After confirming that the surroundings were safe, Zelphy-san came and asked me that. Looking at my magic, it seems she was surprised.

"Nice work, Lyle-sama."

Novem released her vigilance and approached me.

Making a prickling sound, the sight of a hoard of goblins lying on the

ground while discharging electricity wasn't a nice one to look at.

(Come to think of it, that was the first time I've fought a monster.)

The smell was also quite something.

I grimaced.

The scene was one thing, but there was also a group of people depleting my Mana as we spoke.

『It's impossible for you! Was it? … Pu. Fwha. FWHAHAHA! Did you see that!? That's Lyle's ability level! Don't underestimate the Walt House's little child prodigy!』

(Grandfather, that's embarrassing, so please stop.)

『You guys underestimate Lyle way too much. He's still a magician who carries the blood of royalty, you know.』

The Seventh gave a crude impression of the First, and the Sixth Generation spoke with a fed up tone to the rest of the group.

『N-no… but aren't magicians those things, right? I get the feeling it was a lot less convenient back then.』

The Second was also a little shocked, but the Third gave some honest admiration.

『That's quite amazing. It really isn't at a practical level yet, but if you meet the conditions, you can make some simple magic. I've gotten a slightly better impression of you, Lyle.』

The fourth was also pleasantly surprised, and he was overjoyed that his family had produced a magician.

『The results of me pushing myself to get a bride from a viscount house are finally showing themselves! Now the Walt House is a noble family in the truest sense of the word.』

The Fifth generation was more fed up with everyone else.

『Is that much really something to rejoice over? Well, being able to use that much at your age is quite skillful. I do see a need to adjust my evaluation of you.』

『…』

The First Generation was speechless.

He was silent… but that was only after he saw my magic.

“L-Lyle-sama!”

“Wait! What’s wrong!?”

As I heard Novem and Zelphy-san’s voices call out to me, I fell to my knees on the spot. I was out of breath, and I screamed out inside of my head.

(You guys should be have more self awarenessss! I just used magic, so I’m quite tired, you know! I beg of you, please shut up!)

With a simpler magic, three times.

With one of a little higher difficulty, once was my limit.

That was my current ability pertaining to magic. If I raise the level just a little bit more, I understood from this case that I wouldn’t be able to activate it.

(Is it just me, or is this Jewel dragging me down quite a bit?)

Chapter 10 - First Love

After we returned from monster hunting, I unsteadily helped sell the materials we collected and started off in the direction of the guild.

Generally, the guild doesn't handle monster materials.

To be more specific, the small red stones that could be harvested from monsters, Magic Stones, were all the guild manages.

They were a valuable… energy source, as well as the guild's given right.

Adventurers sell materials to merchants and traders and sell the magic stones to the guild for profit. The guild earns profit from business dealings involving those stones.

Of course, there was quite a bit of interest in magic stones.

The guild's management of them has led to explosive profits on their part.

Even so, that was something irrelevant to most normal merchants.

There was no reason for them to take an aggressive stance against the massive system with a monopoly on the trade routes that was the guild.

At some point, I found myself in Hawkins-san's line, and I was waiting for my turn in line.

Having been hit by blood spurts, Zelphy-san was currently using the bath adjacent to the guild.

I was lined up alongside Novem, and she spoke to me in a worried manner.

"Lyle-sama, are you one hundred percent sure you're alright? Your face is still pale."

“I’m fine. I’ve mostly recovered from before, and we’ll return as soon as we finish the paperwork…”

I pushed myself so as not to worry her, but that only turned into worry when we returned.

『As I thought, you’re built too frail.』

I heard the First Generation’s voice. He sounded happy at my beaten state.

(No, please understand this is you guys’ fault.)

To a happy First, the Seventh spoke.

『And who was it who’s face was colored bright red up until now?』
『N-not me!』
『It’s impossible for you! Because you said that with a serious pose, you’ve made quite an embarrassing memory for yourself.』

An image of the Seventh’s grin popped up in my head.

But I’d like it if you would take my Mana into consideration a little bit more.

“Lyle-sama, again, your complexion is… let’s take a rest tomorrow. You’ve pushed yourself too far today. I’ll notify Zelphy-san, so…”

“Yeah, sorry about that…”

Should I not be angry at my ancestors, who would use my magic up as soon as it started recovering?

“Next in line… wait, Lyle-kun!? Your face is pale!”

I even caused Hawkins-san to worry for my sake.

“I-I’m fine.”

“No, that’s not the face of a fine person… good grief, just what is that Zelphy-san doing?”

After Hawkins-san quickly finished the paperwork, we returned for the day, and I immediately laid myself down.

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The day after monster subjugation became a break day.

While going outside to confront monsters hones an adventurer’s competence, it was important to intersperse breaks.

Like us, those who just fight monsters near town often go out every day, and occasionally take a day of rest.

When you were just fighting slimes, the earnings were too meager otherwise.

This time, we managed to take down goblins, so the revenue wasn’t bad, but my poor physical shape made our break set in stone.

We returned to our rented house, and Novem nursed me.

“As I thought, the fatigue from battle is something else. Next time, let’s increase our comrades, and reduce the burden on you, Lyle-sama.”

I wanted to say Novem was giving me overly excessive care, but there was a reason I couldn’t. That was that the ancestors were of the same opinion.

We were up against seven goblins, but my magic was able to perform an almost clean sweep.

But that was only because we had an excellent vanguard known as Zelphy-san.

She covered us immediately and didn't let any of them draw closer. It was because she drew all the attacks that I was able to use my magic.

The old-looking sofa in the living room was quite bruised on the surface and its contents were visible.

I sat down and stared absentmindedly at the fire-less fireplace.

No, I was lost in thought.

(If we're looking for a comrade, it should be a close combat fighter, right? Though that's subject to change based on what role I'm put on.)

Our current state was one where it would be fine no matter what sort of ally we recruited.

It would be fine if they were ranged, and even if all three of us fought on the frontlines, we would have a stable formation.

"Zelphy-san said three as a minimum."

"That's right. If you want to be picky, then there wouldn't be an end to it, but if we get another person, we should be fine for a while."

"Power in numbers, is it?"

As I said that, the Fifth Generation butted in. It was a rare occurrence.

Today, I hadn't heard it once, but it seems it was the Fifth's day today.

『Those words are true, but I think the current Lyle needs to understand the concept of appropriate numbers.』

(Appropriate numbers?)

『Assembling a large force is important, but are you capable of maintaining it? Are they all necessary personnel? How will you develop your forces from here on out? There's a mountain of things to consider. Personal capability, personality, characteristics, circumstances…

commanding people is difficult regardless of the scale.』

I looked at Novem.

She had left the living room and headed to the Kitchen. She appeared to be making tea.

In a small voice, I conversed with the Fifth.

“What sort of personnel selection do you think we should exercise?”

『Just think of what’s necessary for you now. But, proficient people are in high demand. I doubt you’d ever get exactly who you hope for to join your party.』

(As I thought, this is hard.)

“Would it be better to make a temporary alliance and learn about the other person first?”

『Shouldn’t you ask that Zelphy adventurer for know how like that? None of us have any knowledge of being adventurers.』

“Yeah, that’s right…”

(The know how of an adventurer… The First and Second are usually quite reliable, though.)

The First and Second Generations who rushed forward to reclaim savage-turned land and raised a village for the Walt House were in a similar position.

They weren’t adventurers, but they had some similar accomplishments.

The Second said it, but apparently the First has a useful Skill pertaining to matters like these.

I mean, the Second’s skill was one that only displayed its effect when used alongside other Skills.

At present, the skill I'm capable of handling was the First's alone, apparently.

"The quickest route would just be to get the First Generation to help me though, right?"

『Correct. It was a simple, but helpful Skill. I was also taken care of by it, so I know. On top of being easy to use, along with the Second Generation's skill, your battle potential rises in an instant.』

The First Generation's Skill was, to put it shortly, 『Ability Elevation』.

Its Skill Name was 『Full Over』.

It quite simply rose one's ability to overwhelm an enemy.

Simple as it may be, it was exceedingly handy. The House Heads of history all found some use for it or another.

『That all depends on the man himself… in our time, we could just use it without paying mind to something like that, though.』

After becoming a Jewel, the Skills themselves awakened to wills.

Those were the past Heads' memories and hearts. The Ancestors were the Skills themselves.

Meaning if they didn't recognize me, I wouldn't be able to use them.

『My Skill will be quite a load on you. It's not because I hate you, but for the current you, it will be nothing but a burden at present. If you steadily increase your Mana, the possibility exists, though…』

"The problem's that I don't know how to do that. I heard it naturally increases as you grow older."

The way to increase magic was a training method were you just kept using magic. But there was no way of saying whether that method was

actually effective or not.

I'll bet there was some effect, but even if you didn't do anything, Mana should increase alongside your growth.

I've also heard superstitions that through defeating monsters, things other than Mana will grow as well.

But I remember there was never anyone around me who could confirm the truth of the matter.

『If you identify your own Skill, there'll probably be another way out there. Well, isn't it fine to just be patient for now?』

"Hah… (Even when I have a Jewel that's supposed to grant you Skills, it hasn't granted me a single thing…)"

Novem returned, carrying tea, so I put my conversation on hold.

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The next day.

After Novem and I headed to our meeting point with Zelphy-san, we were informed of a change in plans.

After finishing the required paperwork at the guild, we headed to a café that adventurers often patronized.

Perhaps because it was an establishment that allowed you to enter with all your equipment on, it was often used by adventurers.

A seat by the window was open, so the three of us sat and ordered tea. Zelphy-san also ordered some sweet confectioneries.

"My treat. Also, do you two remember when I told you to get some

more members? It's about that, but… I think you should act with some discretion. Don't just try to pull anyone over."

"What do you mean by that?"

Zelphy-san began to explain her reasons.

Having assessed our ability, her conclusion was that we be careful with picking companions.

"You guys' ability level is far from a newcomers' balance-wise. If you remove his stamina problems, Lyle over there's fit in the higher ranks of Dalien's adventurers. And Novem, I saw your Holy Attribute Magic first-hand… You're undoubtedly top-level in Dalien."

On her opinion, I tilted my head.

As an easy starting town for adventurers, the standards of adventurers in the town of Dalien was undoubtedly low compared to the organization as a whole.

But regardless, being in the higher ranks was still certain to be above the norm.

(If our evaluation's high, won't comrades gather around us soon enough…?)

"Is that bad?"

Zelphy-san made a troubled face.

"It's not terrible, but… if you want to avoid the trouble, then it's bad. I kinda looked into the two of you. Information on where you come from as well."

Zelphy-san investigated my home… No, she investigated where I came from, and from there, she learned my standing.

Of course, she doesn't look like she dug too deep. Not that she wanted to know or anything.

“U-um, we didn’t plan to lie, or anything.”

I tried to offer an explanation, but Zelphy stopped me with her hand.

“I’m not saying that’s bad at all. My way is to accomplish the job I’ve been given as best I can. I’ve no plans to throw it out along the way. The penalty for breaking the contract is a scary one too. It’s just that you guys have circumstances, and since you have talent as adventurers, you’ll have to be wary.”

It looks like I was still a little naïve about the adventurer trade. I never thought she would be able to investigate that quickly.

Novem listened to her words with a serious expression.

“You’re goin’ to be stayin’ in Dalien for a while, right? That’ll probably be fine. But you’re going to leave eventually. Be careful about selecting comrades, and make sure it’s someone you can trust. It’ll be a pain if you get some strange group’s eyes on you.”

Strange group probably referred to those who lived by parasitizing off adventurers and those who deceived people of the same trade.

The former were people who eat off of parties, and are only around when it’s time to receive their portion of the loot.

The latter were swindlers.

“Now then, it’s about your future plans, but…”

Before Zelphy-san could finish, the door to the café was swung open with good vigor.

The bell attached to it let out a loud sound.

And footsteps began to come in our direction.

Novem stood up, and I lifted myself slightly to take a look at our opponent’s faces. But they weren’t looking at us at all.

“Zelphy…”

Having her name called, Zelphy-san had a troubled expression as she whispered.

But there, the First Generation’s voice overlapped with her’s.

“Lady Aria…”
『Alice-san! Why is she in a place like this…』

“Eh? So which is it…”

“Lyle-sama?”

As I unintentionally whispered to myself, Novem turned to me. It seems the other party didn’t have any hostility, so she lowered her staff.

I also hurriedly took a seat and looked at them.

The woman Zelphy called Lady and the First called Alice was a red-haired girl of our age.

Her hair that had grown to her back was curling up at the ends by habit.

Her slightly narrowed eyes were violet, and she appeared before us completely out of breath. She seemed to be quite breathless, but at the same time, it looked like she was usually the type of girl with quite some energy to her.

Perhaps because she chose clothes easy to move around in, they stuck quite close to her skin.

However, the fact that Zelphy-san referred to her as Lady carried a slight sense of discomfort.

She definitely had a pretty appearance, and she had some ornaments here and there. However, her appearance was far from fitting one of a higher class.

“I beg of you, Zelphy, please lend me your power.”

“No, well… I’m in the middle of work right now…”

The surrounding eyes were also focused on our table, but they weren’t especially noisy or anything. In low voices, they began speculating on what happened.

“Is it an entanglement of twisted love?”
“That blue haired sunnuvabitch, how envious.”
“And wait, that’s Sis’ Zelphy, right?”
(Why are they glaring at me? I’m not related to any of this, you know.)

(TL: Sis here is anego. Kinda has a boss connotation rather than sister.)

I endured the harsh eyes that were pointed at me for some reason and inclined my ears to the two’s conversation. But the First Generation was also shouting inside the Jewel.

My magic was being steadily chipped away.

“The Lockwarde Hose’s 『Gem』 was stolen! That’s an important heirloom that’s been handed down the family for generations! Please help me take it back!”

Rather than excited, the girl called Aria seemed to be in a major panic. I locked eyes with Novem next to me.

“What does this mean?”

“Um~ Perhaps she’s of the House that Zelphy-san used to serve in the past? I did think she looked like a knight, but it seems she really was one.”

Novem said that, and Zelphy-san corrected her.

“No, I wasn’t a knight, my father… wait! Milady, I’m not a retainer of the Lockwarde House anymore. Also, I’m in the middle of work, so it’s a little troubling if you make a request like that.”

Zelphy-san gave an apologetic look, and Aria made a dark expression.

She turned her eyes to me and started pleading earnestly.

“Are you two Zelphy’s employers? Then it can just be for a little. Please give me some of her time! It’s an important treasure I have to reclaim no matter what… it’s the Lockwarde Gem, and it’s been handed down for over two hundred years! I’ll do anything to thank you, so please lend Zelphy to me!”

Novem stood from her seat again.

“I understand that you may be in a hurry. But we have our own situation as well. Zelphy-san has signed a three month contract with us, and we’ve paid the fee from our meager funds. I can understand your sentiment, but please pull back… and right now, I can only see you as one who relies on others for your own troubles.”

As she said that, Zelphy-san lied face down on the table and didn’t say anything.

Looking at that, Aria-san seemed mortified.

No matter what happened, right now…

『It’s Alice-san! It’s the Alice-san from back then… my first love hasn’t ended!』

The First Generation was in ridiculously high spirits, and because of that, my magic was still going down the drain.

(Wait a second, it’s depleting more than ever before. This dizzy sensation is…)

My head was getting light.

The Second started participating as well.

『Oy! Lyle’s going down! He’s already unsteady! Calm down for a

second!』
『As if I could calm down! My youth, my adolescence, all that would come to be if Alice-san never passed…』

I was hearing such a voice from the Jewel, but after a while, I stopped hearing anything.

At the same time, because Novem had refused, Aria-san grabbed my shoulder.

“I beg of you. I’ll do anything, so please lend my Zelphy… It’s my treasure.”

Her eyes were filled with tears, and she was desperately pleading to me, but I couldn’t even let out my voice.

Perhaps out of desperation, she started shaking me back and forth. My head was spinning round right round baby…

“Please unhand Lyle-sama! Lyle-sama? LYLE-SAMA!?”

“Eh? What… Kyaaaaa!!”

“Wait! Why are you losing consciousness!!?”

As my mind was sent deep inside of me, I thought to myself.

(N-none of this was my fault…)

Chapter 11 - First Generation, Basil Walt

Clad in animal pelts, a wild… barbarian.

His unkempt and long hair parted to show the violet eyes of the savage Walt House's Founder.

He was the third son of another prestigious noble in the imperial capital.

But as he wasn't succeeding his own house, he went and raised a village in remote lands to support himself.

He became independent from the Walt House in the capital, and he cut open the forest paths to the remote land where no one set hands on before.

At the same time, there were tribes of what people would call actual barbarians living near his territory. He even took those sorts of people under him and founded the Walt House.

Of course, the reason he became independent was…

『My first love was from a Baron House. To marry, you'd need quite a bit of status, right? So I was going to reclaim some land and become a Baron of the same level before coming to get her…』

At some point after I collapsed, I found myself in the conference room.

The First Generation told his story, and everyone around us held a complicated expression on learning their origins stemmed from the First's first love.

『So it's pretty much that, right? You were smitten with a woman, so you volunteered for the pioneering corps, and like that, you raised the provincial noble Walt House? … No wonder things were still dicey even after you got married!』

The Second started talking about the First's wife.

It seems that their relationship wasn't the best at the start.

『When I tried returning to the imperial capital, my first love's already been married! Of course I'd be sad!』

The First gripped the Second, but as they both had much to think about, they took a step back.

『Could it be the conditions in the precepts… that Alice-san was the source?』

As the Third Generation said that, the First seemed a little embarrassed.

『Hehe, if I wasn't going to marry her anyways, I might as well just throw those qualities I liked about her out there and marry the one who cleared them. I said that at a party once. That would be the Walt House Family Precepts, I said, and everyone drew away from me. Never thought that'd really become our Precepts, though. I'm even more surprised I actually found someone who fit them.』

To the smiling First, the Second screamed.

(That drains my Mana, so I'd appreciate it if you didn't shout. And wait, that truth's something I never wanted to know.)

『You bastaaaard!! Just how much trouble do you think I went through because of that!? Each and every one of them kept saying precept this and precept that! Because of you, I got married late, and because you just went out and thoughtlessly expanded the village, the after effects were… ARRRRGGGHH!!』

As the Second Generation fell into madness, I called out to the Seventh Generation who was seated near me.

"Um, so why am I here? And wait, what happened after I lost consciousness?"

『Y-yes… the truth is…』

According to him, the one who opened this urgent meeting was the First Generation.

Of all things, having heard of the Lockwarde House's crises, he wanted to make a request to save them.

The Sixth spoke up to him.

『Yeah, but that's not happening. Lending out the adviser Zelphy is out of the question. Do you want to be wasting the money Novem earned by even selling her dowry?』

Being told that, the First folded his arms and made a strained expression.

『No, that's true as well. But there's a girl that's the exact replica of my first love, and she's asking for help… can't you guys understand my feelings?』

The Fifth was composed.

『No, I can't. We never had such freedom in love, and we pretty much married for the sake of the territory.』

『What a cold bunch! And you guys still call yourselves human!? Who do you think you owe to being born into this world!?』

Starting from the Second Generation up…

『My mother.』
『Mom.』
『Right, mom.』
『Mama.』
『My mom.』
『I owe my mother.』

(Uwah… their opinions align for once.)

『C'mon guys!!』

The First continued to cry out, but the Second let out some cold words.

『And, like, you know, how about my feelings after seeing you get so worked up to save your first love when you already have mother? Also, Novem-chan was angry.』

"Eh? Is that so?"

The Second looked at me with a doubtful expression.

『… I mean, you lost consciousness after that Aria girl started shaking you, right? She looked like she was about to cry.』

(Ah, I can imagine that.)

After I was carried away, they checked my condition at the house.

The ancestors were able to confirm that to some extent.

I imagined Novem's flustered state. When we were young, she was much less reliable than she is now.

"Also, when you say save, specifically, what would I be doing?"

It looked like the First Generation was waiting for me to say that.

『The truth is, the ones who stole the treasure are a bandit troupe. They're living in an abandoned mine somewhere around the city of Dalien. So you'll sneak in and regain the treasured 『Gem』 before returning. Think you can handle it?』

He kept glaring at me as if to tell me to do it, but the Second and the rest of them were opposed.

『Impossible. A bandit troupe, you say? Even that Zelphy adventurer girl would be in a pinch there. And wait, there's too little information, so it's too dangerous.』

The Third Generation was of the same opinion.

『I think she should just bring it up with the Knights or Dalien's soldiers. Also, that's a matter the lord here should be dealing with himself, right?』

The rest of them said pretty much the same thing.

The Seventh said that my safety was the most important, it seemed.

『In the first place, It's out of the question to have Lyle dispatch foes at the moment. There's too much of a limit on his Mana usage, and on top of that, would their party be just Lyle and Zelphy? Even if you bring Novem along, how much of a fighting force does that girl offer?』

The enemy was a troupe, so their numbers were likely to be high.

Against an unknown force, just how large of a number can we muster? There were many uncertain factors, and the ancestors were opposed to it.

『I want to save her! I couldn't get my feelings across! Also, she's seeking help from Lyle at the moment… this has to be fate!』

『No, it's just a misunderstanding.』

As the Fourth Generation said that with resolution, The First Generation fell back into his chair. I did feel sad when looking at him, but if you told me to take out a thief troupe, it was a little troubling.

And wait, the only time I went up against humans was that match with Celes.

I doubt that it would serve as good reference.

But there, the First Generation started muttering to himself.

『Of course. I mean, it's my blood. Even if you get it to Count status, the contents are still the same.』

Snap… it was like a sound like that resonated through the room.

『No, I'm sorry. I was an idiot for placing expectations on you guys. I just had some light expectations that Lyle over there, who carries some royal blood would take some action or another, but that's right… when it comes down to it, you're all just *my* descendants. You know your caliber.』

On the First's transparent display, everyone seemed rather irritated.

"Eh, um… e-everyone?"

『… W-we can totally d-do it. There's just no merit.』

As the fourth said that, the Second agreed.

『Don't group us together with you. If we get serious, than a mere bandit brigade or two would be annihilated before you know it!』

The Third spoke quietly in an angry voice.

『This guy's definitely looking down on us. Even like this, I've led troops, and crushed plenty a bandit hold myself, you know? The times have changed from when you were around, Founder. 』

The First Generation stirred it up even more.

『No, no, don't worry about it. In the end, you can't do anything, right? You guys all say you've experienced war, but generally, you just watched from the back, and left it all to your subordinates, right? No, since you're all nobles, I don't think that's bad. If you pushed yourself and stepped out on the front, you'd just trouble the others.

Hearing that, the Fifth glared at him.

『What? We were commanding on the front lines, not that you need to know. And wait, it's not us, but Lyle that's going to be fighting them, right? Also I haven't said a word about him not being able to do it.』

The Sixth Generation was the same.

『It's quite a novel feeling to be called a coward. But this time, Lyle is going to be the one doing it. Like he is right now, I think it will be difficult. Oh, I never said he wouldn't be capable of doing it.』

The First added more onto it.

『It's not my problem, so don't look so menacing. And wait, so it was true when they said you were weak. Oh my, I'm not talking about you guys, please understand that.』

While saying he wasn't talking about us, he surveyed us all with a grin.

The Seventh, who had risen from his chair, pointed his finger at the First and spoke.

『Even if we were doing it, you wouldn't be lending a finger! On top of not cooperating with Lyle, you'll order him to save others!?』

The First lowered his fist onto the table.

A bang reverberated, silencing everyone.

『If it's to save that Aria girl, then I'll lend my all! The Skill I have, and how to use it, I'll give it all to Lyle! But that's only if he'd do it, of course!』

Hearing that, the irritated faces of those around returned to normal.

Looking at that scene, I was quite shaken up.

The First was also opening his eyes wide with surprise. And there, the Fourth Generation took the lead.

『Well then, the First Generation will be lending Lyle his assistance. With this, we've finally managed to resolve one of our major problems.』

『… Eh?』

The First Generation had been left behind by the conversation. Within that flow, the Third Generation directed a smile at me.

『Isn't that fabulous, Lyle? With this, you can finally use a Skill.』

"Y-yes… u-um… what was that just now?"

As I inquired about the situation that had just occured, the Fifth offered an explanation with a tired tone.

『No, it's just that he was trying to provoke us, so we used that to get the First Generation to concede. No matter the case, I doubt he'll take back what he said just now. And wait, you're not the sort of wimp who would do something like that, right First Generation?』

『A-a man doesn't go back on his word!』

After hearing that, everyone stood from their chairs and started off towards their personal rooms.

The Sixth Generation called out to me regarding my future.

『Lyle, when you wake up, make sure to get some information out of Aria. Also, make sure you ask the First about his Skill. Things'll get busy for you.』

The ancestors returned to their rooms with smiles on their faces.

Only the First and I remained.

"… U-um…?"

『S-so they got me…』

As I looked at him make a truly regretful face, I began to get curious about just what the situation was in reality.

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『Then I'll be giving you a Skill explanation, okay?』

After everyone else returned, I was dragged off to the First Generation's room.

The room took the form of the estate he lived in. But from my point of view, it was more like a hut.

"Yes. Well, skills are generally one per person, right? How would I put it to use…"

I received an explanation from him.

『It's originally a single Skill. When it's sealed in a gem, then Skills that aren't yours can generally only be used at their basic levels. If you've got talent, perhaps it's possible otherwise. In your case, I'm going to be teaching you.』

While stored in a gem, it was impossible to draw out the performance of the Skill the original wielder was able to wield, apparently.

However, Jewels have different circumstances, it seems.

『You know my Skill, right?』

"I heard it was called Full Over."

The First Generation's Skill was, by its pure simplicity, an effective one.

『Ability-wise, it raises your basic abilities by ten to twenty percent. Just think of it as becoming ten to twenty percent stronger.』

"Yes."

The First Generation told me about his own skill, but with just that, it seems he understood it was impossible for me to take out the Bandit

Troupe.

Even if he was rotten, he was once a feudal lord, and he felt that it won't end prettily.

Even so, he was trying to get his descendant to save the one who was the spitting image of his first love.

『One if its applications is called 【Limit Burst】. It lets you remove your body's limiter, and strengthens it, umm… it recovers you as you fight.』

"Recovery, is it?"

『Yeah, I don't know the specifics, but apparently if you go over the limit, and overuse your body, then normally, you'd break yourself.』

As he talked about what was normal, it was as if he was implying he wasn't normal.

(No, well… I guess he doesn't look like a normal person, at least.)

The savage-styled First Generation glared at me.

『You were just thinking something strange, weren't you?』

"N-no, not really!"

『Then I'll continue the explanation. Pretty much, I'll be letting you use that enhancement Skill that lets you break your boundaries. However, with your body, what you can stand is probably… about three minutes?』

"Eh? Isn't that an important point!? Please don't just vaguely throw out three minutes there!"

A restriction was applied to the Skill's use.

The reason seemed to be that my body wouldn't be able to handle it.

『Listen here, if you use this one on yourself, it'll strengthen you, but

if you use it on an injured person, it can speed up their recovery. It's 'cause it even strengthens regeneration!』

It really was an amazing Skill.

It was quite simple, but if you thought about it, those were some extraordinary abilities.

『Now try using it, why don't you?』

"… Um, how?"

And like that, my training under the First started.

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When I opened my eyes, what stretched out before me was the ceiling of our rented house.

I rose from the bed and felt that my body's movement had dulled.

Nearby, Novem was nursing me.

"Lyle-sama!?"

"Novem… how many days has it been since I collapsed?"

I want as much time as possible.

"It will be morning soon. I won't say it was a full day, but you've been out for that long. I was truly worried, you know."

"Sorry about that. Also, Aria Lockwarde, was it… please call her over. Zelphy-san too. They haven't went to subjugate bandits yet, right?"

I think Zelphy-san and Lockwards-san were likely still in town.

From her reaction at the café, Zelphy-san wasn't interested in her proposition.

And no matter how much of a tomboy she looked, I doubt that noble Lady would go charge a bandit stronghold alone.

"… Lyle-sama, subjugating bandits falls under the job of the Feudal Lord. Or perhaps the vigilante corps will deal with it."

I understand what she wanted to say, as she tried stopping me with a serious expression.

But I have a reason.

(It's a chance for the First Generation to recognize me. Also…)

『She sure is a nice girl, that Novem-chan. She firmly understands that it's the Lord's job. Now then, Lyle… it's time for our field of expertise.』

The Third Generation spoke to me.

Right, dispatching enemies was one of the larger worries of a feudal lord.

The family heads of history… mostly Third Generation onwards, were quite tormented by such problems.

"Novem, this is something I've decided. I'm sorry, but I'll be helping them reclaim the Gem from the Bandit Brigade. Can I have you wait in the house?"

"I cannot do such a thing. Even if you're to lend your aid, I'll accompany you. However, we don't even know the scale of the bandits."

Right, we don't know.

Their scale, their equipment, or their ability…

Then we just have to learn.

『Let's investigate about the brigade first. Their stronghold's already been located, so they don't seem to be anything special, anyways. You've also to learn the reason the feudal lord hasn't sent out a force to subjugate them yet. You've got plenty to do.』

I spoke to Novem.

"Novem, please lend me your strength… also, this is a war we can win."

Hearing that, she silently nodded.

Chapter 12 - Even If You Call It Foolish

Immediately after I awoke, I got in contact with Zelphy.

We met at the same café as before, and there, I requested that she accept Lockworde-san's job.

"Did you perhaps hit your head? To aid the former heiress of a noble household in opposin' bandits, of all things. Call me impressed, but I won't say it's a good decision."

Zelphy-san looked at me, quite amazed.

In her head, she was probably thinking something like, 'no wonder this one was kicked out of his household.' But that was fine for now.

She ordered some confectioneries and ate them up quite neatly. I see. I bet she was raised quite nicely. It was just as Novem said.

(She really is like a knight. Her fighting style is one thing, and I guess this is her father's influence.)

"This is my decision. In the worst case, I don't mind if Zelphy-san decides to leave us. I'll tell Hawkins-san on my own."

Hearing that, she sighed, as she turned her eyes to Novem.

"I thought you were smarter than that, Novem."

"It's something Lyle-sama decided for himself. Also…"

"Also?"

"Lyle-sama said he was capable of doing it, so there's no problem."

It did feel like Novem's trust towards me was much too high, but still, I have a fighting chance here.

The ancestors also acknowledged that.

"… The current Lockwarde house has fallen, so you won't get anything like a reward. You saw milady's attire, right? Also, the current head's no good. Their predecessors were quite diligent, and they were splendid nobles who held the rank of Viscount at the imperial capital, though."

So the Lockwarde house was declining.

But the one being rewarded weren't the Lockwardes. I get the feeling we were the ones paying here.

And the one we'd receive reimbursement from was Dalien's feudal lord.

"I don't mind. We'll be the one paying the reward here."

"Hah? Wait a sec'. Just what do you guys think you're sayin'? If you really hit your head, I know quite a good doctor."

I gave a bitter smile, as I continued to ask her.

"Then I'd rather you introduce us to someone with information instead. Someone knowledgeable on the bandit troupe, as well as Dalien's lord."

"I understand the bandits, but the lord?"

It looked like Zelphy-san was making a troubled face, but in truth, her eyes had narrowed.

(It looks like it was just as the ancestors… the Third and Fifth, predicted.)

"Of course."

I said it with a smile. Deep down, I knew there was a chance of failure, but you couldn't show that to your opposition.

Be self-confident. Otherwise, no one would follow you.

“Well, we’ll win, you know. Also, this is my area of expertise. Right. Can I add on another request?”

I added on a lie like that.

In truth, I’d never decently fought a human before. The only experience of fighting I have was from the ancestors in the Jewel.

“… What could it be?”

“Don’t worry, this one’s a simply job. It’s just I think it’s one you’ll be able to do well. I want to put in a request to Zelphy-san who’s so trusted by the guild.”

Gradually, everything transpired just as my ancestors anticipated.

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We came to the mansion Dalien’s feudal lord lived in.

From an information dealer Zelphy-san introduced us to, we got to know the sort of person he was.

And, we learned the present state of the city known as Dalien.

Fitting of the word reliable, 【Ventra Rodornia】 was probably thought of as a splendid lord.

With the territory this close to the capital, he carried the risk of serfs immigrating to the larger city if he handled his situation poorly.

Minding his land’s growth, he was able to compete with the nearby capital.

It was the Rodornia family that had made Dalien bigger and bigger over a large amount of time.

I straightened the collar of the shirt I purchased.

“It’s been a while since I last wore something like this… for some reason, it feels longer than has actually passed.”

“It suits you, Lyle-sama.”

Novem was also clad in clothes suited for the daughter of a Baron House… no, I won’t say it was that much, but she was wearing a lovely dress. Of course, perhaps it was due to the person herself that it achieved such an effect.

(It’s been like that since back then, but Novem sure has that atmosphere to her.)

I’m not wearing my usual traveler’s clothes either. From a tailor in Dalien, they were high class… hand-me-downs.

We used the majority of the money we had earned, but of course, there was a reason to this.

The Sixth, who was in charge of today, let out a voice from the Jewel.

『Okay, there’s no problem with your appearance. Now, Lyle… are you prepared to make a fool of yourself?』

I touch the Jewel to indicate my affirmation.

『Perfect! Then shall we go… it’s time for the foolish son kicked out of his house to have a meeting with the Lord of Dalien.』

As the Sixth said that, I looked towards the wary gatekeeper.

Rather than wary, he seemed to be concluding that we were the children of some noble or another as he looked at our clothing.

There was no sign of him directing a weapon at us.

I approached him and declared my intent.

“I’m Lyle Walt. I made an appointment with the Lord, can you please obtain confirmation?”

There, the guard’s eyes opened a little.

(As I thought, he knows. Zelphy-san also knew, so there’s no doubt about it.)

“Please wait here for a moment. I will receive confirmation momentarily.”

After saying that, the gatekeeper started to exchange words with the soldiers inside the gates.

Both Novem and I continued to direct a smile at him.

After a while, not a soldier, but a man wearing a suit came out to meet us. Looking at that, I understood that the meeting was possible.

“Lyle Walt-sama, correct? Ventra-sama will see you. But at present, he is occupied, so please wait within the estate for a while.”

I nodded towards the polite treatment.

“Yes, I do not mind. I am actually sorry on my side for having to pay a visit all of a sudden. The Lord of Dalien is being tolerant of us.”

Novem silently gave a bow.

“Then, this way…”

Under his guidance, we entered the mansion.

Compared to the scale of the territory’s advancement, the mansion felt small.

『It's just as I thought.』

As the Sixth said that, I felt relief at the fact that everything was going according to plan.

According to the information dealer, the Lord was a sociable-looking short and plump man in his forties. His reputation among the populace was at a level where they were relatively satisfied.

Meaning to the people, he was ranked as a good Lord.

Apparently, while he looked nice, he also seemed a little unreliable.

A lord that has a slight unreliable side… that was the information I received. But mine and the ancestors' opinions on the matter were different.

『The gatekeeper and the suited employee were truly loyal. I won't compliment them too much, but their treatment of us was tender. Reliable, and a Lord that's expanded his territory on this scale. There's no doubt he's an excellent lord! Quite perfect!』

The Sixth sounded happy.

It was about that, but I felt a little depressed in that regard.

The reason being, reliable and excellent… a lord even loved by the people.

Meaning…

『He must've played his hand a lot to advance the territory! On top of being shorthanded, he's got a personality where he can't slacken his rule! Great! There's plenty of gaps to take advantage of!』

The lively Sixth Generation understood the problem at hand.

There was remarkable growth, and it was an environment where a lot of jobs were circulating around adventurers. But, while liked by the people, he neglected a Bandit Brigade.

I was sure there was a reason. That was why we looked into it.

In high spirits, the ancestors examined the information we had on hand: The Lord's character and the problems of the land. Also, the current situation.

『Two labyrinths manifested within the territory, and for that sake, he dispatched his personal soldiers and knights. He's taking great efforts for a village on his outskirts… yep! A splendid lord!』

(Even if you praise him that much, we're going to be stabbing at those points when negotiations start…)

I had suspected whether or not he was tied to the bandits themselves, but it looked like someone put their hands into the information circulating, so that line disappeared.

(Since we came to Dalien, I was suspicious because there weren't any bandits acting up, though.)

If they were directly connected to the Lord, we were just going to negotiate with him and have him return it.

We were told to wait in a room of the mansion, so Novem and I sat on the sofa as we sipped tea.

(Now then, here, I should play the part of a pitiful noble boy who was banished from his family.)

I get the feeling I'm not too far off the mark anyways, but here, my acting will prove important. Also, I'll be putting your Walt name to good use.

I've received the ancestors' permission, so there was no problem… was what I'd like to think.

『Hahaha! It's getting interesting, Lyle!』

The Sixth Generation's high tension caused me to draw back a little.

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Having completed his work or not, the Lord appeared before us after about an hour had passed.

He was looking straight at my eyes.

“I, Lyle Walt, have been driven from my territory, but I will definitely reclaim it and restore it to the glory it once held! Concerning the matter, I’d like to obtain Ventra-sama’s aid.”

The former heir of the provincial noble Walt House.

That was his current evaluation of me.

I’ve determined that the information that had reached Dalien wasn’t too detailed.

At the same time, using the chance, I thought I would lock that evaluation of me as a person in place.

『A foolish brat where there was no helping it if you got kicked out… a dreamer works too. A noble that only speaks of dreams is fitting of you right now, Lyle.』

That was the Fifth Generation’s opinion.

Naturally, some of the other ancestors were opposed.

But right now, I’m in a situation where it wasn’t strange for someone to come to me and try to use me.

The ancestors also felt the relay of information had gotten much faster when compared to their eras.

For that sake, to protect myself, I’ll use the opportunity to set my

place in the world in stone.

The Walt house didn't make any movements in regards to my actions.

I also plan to investigate just what they will do as a result of this.

Would they come to finish me off after I've risen such a ruckus? Or would they just continue to abandon me?

To learn the reaction of the monster that reigned over the Walt House, Celes, we planned to use this matter to its utmost.

(But, it would be a little troubling for me if they actually start sending assassins.)

According to the others, that problem will be settled with the First's Skill.

When I thought of the savage-styled founder, there was no helping it if I was doubtful. But, his Skill was truly amazing.

The feudal lord in front of my eyes… Ventra Rodornia, had a slightly cramped face as he looked at me.

『Excellent, Lyle. That's definitely the face of someone troubled over a complete buffoon! He let down his guard and let it show on his face, gahahahah!!』

It was just as the ecstatic Sixth Generation said.

"L-Lyle-dono, even if you ask for my assistance, I can't prepare a response to such a sudden petition. Also, I doubt something like that would work. For your sake, I'll pretend I didn't hear it, so could you please return for today…"

He wanted to pretend not to hear it. Meaning he wanted it not to have happened.

The Walt House was stationed in a remote region, but it was a legitimate Count House. It boasted military might, and it had connections

with the Imperial Capital in the center.

That was what Ventra-san must have been thinking of when he got entangled with an idiot son like me.

『Just like that, Lyle… he's making a face as if a bomb had been brought within his territory! He definitely looks like he wants to kick you out!』

He was probably thinking of just how to deal with me right now. The vassal standing beside him stood there without displaying any perplexity.

Perhaps he was a guard, but his skills were considerable.

(This pressure he emits just by standing… he's remarkable.)

The fact that he had a subordinate like that was also a show of his worth.

"That's right, Ventra-sama… recently, a bandit brigade has moved into an abandoned mine in the area, I heard. I, Lyle, would definitely like to be of use to you, and as such, I request permission to subjugate them."

"Permission? I received information that you had become an adventurer, though?"

It looks like he investigated me well.

He even investigated about my doings after I arrived in the city.

He was skilled.

"Yes, but considering your position, I thought there was no way you could leave a bandit troupe alone. So, I'd like permission. What's the problem? In the wake of me defeating them, it's fine if the credit for the achievement goes to you, Ventra-sama!"

I said that with a smile, and Ventra-san shifted his gaze in unease.

"Please be at peace. I've hired a veteran adventurer. I've also called

out to the guild, so I have numbers as well."

I continued to reassure him with a smile.

There, Ventra-san's face went a little pale.

"… It's a greatly pleasant offer, but as I thought, I'd like it if you leave the matters of the territory to me. This time, let me accept just the sentiment, and…"

『Good. Lyle… now.』

On the Sixth Generation's signal, I made a slightly regretful face.

"Is that so… then I will be subjugating them this time of my own will. Even like this, I'm a Walt man! A bandit brigade or two is easy enough. Oh, I won't spread your name, Ventra-sama, so please rest at ease."

My objective changed.

But Ventra-san's face became more troubled.

『Even if you've been driven out, you're a person of the esteemed Walt House… I'll bet he can't make a decision due to the lack of precise information. At this rate, if you make mincemeat of them, you may be charged for it. Good… this is getting fun!』

"… Lyle-dono, let me be a little blunt here. Even if you attach a former to it, you're a person who was the heir to a household. I'd like it if you didn't meddle in excess. If you're an adventurer for now, then you should be exploring yourself for a means to live as an adventurer. If it's help in that field, then unskilled as I am, I will lend you my aid. However, I'd appreciate if you didn't insert yourself into matter pertaining to this territory."

(Unskilled, is it… I wonder if he means monetary aid. In truth, he really wants to kick me out, though.)

Ventra-san's side was right on the money. But I have my own reasons, and I have to hunt bandits no matter what.

(I do feel sorry for him.)

“Come to think of it…”

As I was about to say something else, perhaps because he was irritated I had avoided answering to him, his eyebrows twitched.

“What could it be?”

“No, it just seems that this bandit troupe is acting quite active. While straddling two territories, they stuck themselves to Dalien. They must have amassed quite a treasury for themselves… they must be plenty troubling to the lord that let them escape.”

“… I’ll bet.”

His expression didn’t change, but I understood that I was annoying him.

『If you bring in the surrounding lords, it’ll be a considerable pain. And because of his diminished forces, his defense is thin.』

They don’t seem to be too smart of a group, but even though they had extended themselves over the territory to make a killing, the Feudal Lord couldn’t put hands on them.

Their stronghold was out in the open, but the fact that they were untouched was plenty suspicious in itself. I tried looking up various things about that, and I found something quite unamusing.

(Even so, now’s the time for the bandits. Perhaps they worked their heads a little, or their luck was good…)

Bringing in troops from other territories would serve as an excuse for war.

The lord that left them alone after they’d raged however they wanted must have undergone some painful memories.

(And wait, I think they have someone relatively sharp among them, but it was probably luck.)

If they had done it knowing full well, then they were an enemy to be wary of. But that didn't seem right.

The ancestors immediately concluded that the enemy wasn't someone of such high caliber. As I thought, they probably just have experience in the field of defeating enemies.

But the troupe that rampaged over other lands was quiet in Dalien. What would the other lords think?

"You appear to be quite busy. While I, Lyle, may be inadequate, I will aid you in carrying the troubles on your head, Ventra-sama. It wouldn't be strange if the surrounding territories were to come under a strange misunderstanding, correct?"

As I said that, he let out a sigh.

"Hah… so what do you want? Are you saying that if you moved as pleased in this territory, there would be merit to me? I can only see demerits in that."

(That's not the case.)

I continued with a bright smile.

"Please lend me manpower and funds. I'll show you that I can kick the bandit brigade out splendidly. It's just that…"

"That?"

I answered after leaving a pause.

"I will be using my name. Naturally, I will also be taking their amassed wealth. Ventra-sama will be providing manpower and funding."

I was at an overwhelming advantage with these conditions.

But there was also merit to Ventra-san. The one that eliminated the bandits from his land would be me.

If I defeated them as a simple adventurer, the surrounding lords wouldn't be able to make a fuss over it.

The mountain of treasure would be transferred to me, so Ventra wouldn't be placed under suspicion.

『Use the bandits, Dalien's lord was able to collect the treasure they amassed by breaking into houses of other territories… He doesn't want them to think along those lines! Problems will arise with his bordering lands!』

I heard the Sixth Generation's delighted voice again.

"It appears you have a rough estimate of the manpower I currently possess. But if I were to say, my manpower is the very people of this land. There's no way I could lend them to you."

"I see. Then that means you are fine with funding part of it? (That's right. But we already know something like that.)"

I need him to understand the person I'm supposed to be. Right… 『Lyle the Dreamer』. In order to get him to think of me that way, I purposely made the demand.

Lending out soldiers or military authority was something that never usually happened.

"Yes. I'll present fifty gold coins onto you."

『Fumu, in today's standards, does it not sound meager? Lyle, raise the bar. Listen here, business meetings are…』

On the Sixth's words, I raised my pricing.

"The bandits will be gone, and one of your troubles will be resolved. How does two hundred gold sound?"

On my offer, Ventra-san let out a laugh.

“Ahaha, Lyle-dono… are you not looking down on me too much?”

Saying that, he gave a signal to the retainer by his side with his fingers.

The retainer left the room.

I bet I had offered a lower sum than he had anticipated.

Considering the scale of the city of Dalien, it was an amount he wouldn’t even think of as loose change.

But that was my aim.

『Good, that’s fine as it is. He probably thinks you’re oblivious to the world, and that you haven’t had a proper education on such matters now.』

The Sixth sounded satisfied.

(I just have to act to make the opposition think I’m no good, so if you want to call it easy, it probably is, but… it’s tiring.)

When the retainer returned, his hand was clasped around a leather bag.

Its contents were gold coins, two hundred at that.

“Under your name, you’re going to subjugate the bandits, Lyle-dono. I’ve prepared your funds. However, it’s alright if we remain unconnected, right?”

“Yes! Thank you very much, Ventra-sama!”

『He’s probably under the impression that he’s lost nothing even if we fail. If we succeed, he won’t have conflicts with the neighboring territories, and if we lose, the ticking time bomb known as Lyle will have disappeared from his sight. There’s also the possibility that the bandit brigade would move in that case. Two hundred gold coins is a dirt cheap purchase.』

Novem, who was lined up next to me, simply sat and watched the exchange with a smile.

Ventra-san must think of me as an oblivious idiotic son led around by a woman.

(Now next is…)

『Lyle, next up is gathering personnel!』

While I listened to the Sixth Generation's ecstatic voice, I smiled and shook hands with Ventra-san, as he smiled back and reminded me not to use his name.

Chapter 13 - An Easy Job, Where All You Have To Do Is Stand

What we submitted to the guild's reception desk was a written request to adventurers.

We had to pay the request fee and reward deposit, but like that, we were able to gather manpower.

However, having accepted the form, Hawkins-san shifted his eyes between the page and my face numerous times.

"L-Lyle-kun… there's no mistake in this monetary sum, right? The acceptance time range is four days. Just by participating, the reward is two silver. The contents say they just have to stand at a designated point?"

It was natural for him to doubt it.

The payment and the job level were completely out of sync.

"There is no issue. Also, about the number of people we'll be taking on."

"Eh? Yes…"

Hawkins-san looked troubled, as he confirmed the numbers written on the form.

"One hundred!?"

"We've the funds to reward up to two hundred, though. In essence, our goal… is just to get them to stand around the entrance of an abandoned mine. Also, I'll pay the reward separately, and search for people on my own as well."

Hearing that, Hawkins-san confirmed the details of the documents again and again.

『If it's just as our intel stated, then it's twenty or over. Even if you call it overkill, the only one moving will be Lyle. Well, if you think of it as participating in a war, it isn't a bad earning.』

As the Third Generation said that, I experienced some vague feelings.

(Working one day afforded me around six to ten large copper coins. Even so, we're giving out two silver for a two day job. Still, if we don't do at least that much, we won't get a flood of applicants.)

『Those blinded by money will flock. Let's do it with a bang, why don't we?』

Still as an idiot son, though.

Subjugating a few tens of thieves with hundreds must appear as a quite a joke to the residents of Dalien.

That would definitely send my location to the Walt house… my family would definitely learn it. Of course, the possibility they already had was high.

But if I carried out foolish acts of this level, what would they think of it?

I really would be getting assassinated some day or another.

(If it's by Celes's whim, it wouldn't be strange for something like that to happen.)

Then after this joke… this idiotic brat's struggle, what would happen then?

(In the end, this is all a gamble, isn't it…)

As Hawkins-san was making sure there were no deficiencies in the paperwork, I added on another thing.

"Ah, right. I wanted to ask you something, Hawkins-san, if that would be alright."

“Yes. As long as it’s something I can answer.”

Hearing that, I confirmed it with him.

Naturally, Zelphy-san had no complaints.

There was no way the guild would deny the request.

(Because it’s always better to have more cards to play.)

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In front of the Guild’s first floor.

In the space where hoards of people came and went, I made an address in a loud voice.

“I am the Walt House’s… the former heir of a Count House! On this occasion, I am standing to eliminate the bandits that have made a nest near Dalien! Anyone who believes my cause is just, please volunteer!”

『Hey, your voice is too soft. You can laugh if you want, so just make it dramatic here.』

The Fourth Generation directed me, as I loudly publicized the operation.

Ridiculously.

I even invited some laughter.

“A noble’s bringing down bandits?”
“And wait, wasn’t he driven out…”
“Isn’t that because he’s no good?”
“Just leave whatever bandit problems to the lord.”

“After the labyrinth’s over with, they’ll be back soon enough. We just have to hold out until then.”

While laughing sarcastically, the adventurers passed me by.

There were some that openly guffawed as well.

“Now is time to stand, and as knights, our mission is… (I-it’s time to get desperate!)”

I endured the embarrassment and continued to call out to them.

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After I finished my petitioning, I met up with Novem and returned to our rented house.

In front of the entrance-way, a red-haired woman… Aria Lockwarde, was standing menacingly with her arms crossed.

Her folded arms were propping up her breasts.

It wasn’t much different than usual, but today, I was mentally worn out, so I took a fleeting glance at her chest before posing the inevitable question.

“Um… do you have some business with our house?”

“Don’t give me that business nonsense! Just what was that thing from earlier today!?”

‘Thing’ likely referred to my grand advertising.

“Now, well, the reward for subjugating bandits…”

“Lyle-sama was amazing.”

As I became embarrassed from Novem's flattery, Lockwarde-san approached me.

Her long strides were not something I would think would come from a noble lady.

"I was only asking you to lend me Zelphy-san! As long as you did that, I'd make use of some connections and gather an elite few to reclaim the gem… if you let it out so openly, then even the Bandit Brigade will hear about it, will they not!?"

Novem responded.

"Are you sure you aren't misunderstanding something?"

"W-what? I mean, in truth, everyone was making fun of that performance."

I acted exactly for that sake.

Though it was not a mistake… but for some reason, I felt sad.

"The reason we took action was precisely because we had our own reasons. Or could it be… you were under the impression we were taking action for your sake?"

On Novem's harsh words, Lockwarde-san winced.

I heard the First Generation's voice.

『U-um Novem-chan… If possible, I'd like you to forgive her, is what I think. Let's all be friends, okay?』

The Second spoke up.

『Just whose side is this guy on? There's no particular reason to keep her in a pleasant mood, is there? We'll be doing the same regardless.』

There was no doubt that my objective was to retrieve the Lockwarde

House's gem.

Those were the conditions I needed to clear to gain the First's assistance.

However, my personal feelings of wanting to help her weren't particularly meager.

This time around, the reason the ancestors were working together was to get the First to recognize me and to guarantee my own safety.

"B-but there's no meaning if the bandit troupe takes flight!"

"… Then how about you take action?"

"Eh?"

Novem continued to speak to her coldly. At the same time, her argument was quite sound.

"Zelphy-san accepted a guild request to act as our adviser. Of course, we already paid the appropriate compensation for that. Right now, we've entrusted another job to her, but we've properly paid the request fee."

"I-I do feel truly sorry for that. But I don't have that sort of sum to pay…"

Lockwarde-san's house was in decline. No, it collapsed.

If they could muster up a large enough sum, they wouldn't be relying on their old friend Zelphy-san.

"Without doing whatever you can accomplish, why must you continue to find fault in Lyle-sama's work? Or could it be that if Lyle-sama succeeds, you plan to demand the gem from him? Just how selfish must you be?"

"E-even I'm…"

Looking at Lockwarde-san's mortified face, I tried to insert myself

between the two, but the Third put a stop to that.

『Lyle, how about you leave this one to Novem-chan? That will be best for that Aria girl's sake as well.』

He stopped my stopping. Novem confirmed my lack of action, before she continued to berate Lockwarde-san.

"Even if they're laughed at, even if they're carrying shame, I wouldn't laugh at someone who was giving it their all. I think that those who merely watch from the sidelines are unqualified to say something about it."

Lockwarde-san also tried countering.

"And that's why I properly sought out assistance… what do you expect me to do alone!? What are you saying a little girl like me can do!?"

I looked at the two of them.

The Third Generation offered me some advice.

『Novem-chan took it upon herself to play the villain in your place. Originally, that was something you'd have to say to her, Lyle.』

The First also told me.

『That's right! Get a grip on yourself, ya' bastard!』

The Second offered the First a friendly reminder.

『Do you comprehend that we're doing all this troublesome stuff because of you? And wait, try repeating whatever you just said in front of a mirror.』

In front of me, Lockwarde-san burst out crying and tears streamed down her face. The strong-willed demeanor she carried up until just before was nowhere to be found.

She wanted her precious things back.

But doing that alone was impossible.

She probably agonized over it, and I understood her impatience.

I pulled Novem into the house. As we passed by Lockwarde-san, I spoke.

“We’re departing tomorrow morning. If you happen to catch sight of a group on standby outside the entrance, that’s the bandit subjugation force. Do whatever you want.”

“Eh?”

Saying that, I entered the house, taking Novem by the hand.

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The morning of the next day.

I looked at the gathered carts, wooden poles, and boards, and nodded.

“If it’s this, there’ll be no misunderstandings when seen from afar.”

『Fumu, I’m surprised you got this much together with so little time. The merchants seemed to be quite wary of it as well.』

The Seventh looked at those packed into the carts and confirmed the completion of our preparations.

These were the gathered adventurers… with all one hundred and thirty spread out, it looked like an army from afar.

(There are a few others here too.)

『… That Aria girl’s here too.』

I shifted my eyes and found the red-haired Lockwarde-san.

Seeing her, Novem didn't say a word. She didn't say anything, but she seemed a little relieved.

"Are you sure it wouldn't be best for her sake if she didn't come?"

As I said that, Novem shook her head.

"She had that sort of personality from the start. I think she began to feel regret. From that regret, perhaps she lost went down the wrong path… though it's just my arbitrary predictions."

We didn't have any work for a majority of the personnel. We seriously just hired them to head to the destination point. Those with actual work were less than ten percent of those present.

It was a job where they truly just had to stand there. I advertised it as such, and that was why they gathered en masse.

Naturally, we didn't have time, so the numbers we gathered were smaller than I thought.

『You understand, right, Lyle? The war has already begun.』

On the Seventh Generation's words, I silently nodded.

"Now, let's depart."

And on my words, Novem nodded as well.

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An abandoned mine near Dalien…

There, with his gathered treasure to his back, a single man sat on top

of a wooden box.

In his hand was a red gem.

Gazing at the treasure in his right hand, the man smiled.

“I’ve gotten my hands on something nice. Because of this, I was able to cleanly sweep out all the monsters that had stuck themselves to this area.”

He had grown a scraggly beard, and he was a largely built man, whose height had surpassed two meters.

His twenty three subordinates looked at their leader and laughed to themselves.

“As expected of our leader. Even so, I never thought a pampered noble brat would come at us head on.”

As one of his men said that, the large man let out some hearty laughter.

In front of the twenty three, he informed them of the subjugation force.

“After he’d made such a grand show at the guild, of course they’d come. What’s more, without even knowing some of our men had infiltrated their ranks. Let them struggle all they want with their troops of clay.”

The information about Lyle’s group had gotten through to them.

Altogether, the man had twenty six men. Of them, three were among the adventurers in Dalien.

They bought necessary supplies in town, and when they were making preparations to take them back to the main force, they got their hands on information about Lyle’s group.

From that info, they knew that a majority of those coming were adventurers toting cypress sticks and shields of wood… What’s more, they

were seen through as to not even having much skill.

"They may be planning to surprise us with numbers and demand our surrender… but we can't have that, can we? We won't end in a place like this."

The large man had ambition.

He wanted to leave behind the status of a bandit and lead a mercenary troupe.

In the queue of legendary mercenaries who went on to become Feudal Lords, he aspired to stand alongside them.

He had drifted into Dalien, and even made connections with the city's inhabitants. He slowly brought his own subordinates in and sold the treasure they collected to amass funds for their next plan.

The reason they never plundered Dalien was so they could live the lives of mercenaries there from here on.

And the card they needed to play to grant that desire had descended among them.

"As long as we have this gem, there's nothing to fear. If that green noble brat comes along, then we'll just take his head."

"Leader! The woman the kid has with him's quite the looker!"

As one of his subordinates said that, the large man smiled.

"I see! After I've tasted her, I'll let you guys have a bite."

"Hehe, well thanks for that. She'd had my interest since the time I saw her at the guild."

The portion of the group that had infiltrated the guild kept themselves informed on Lyle's activity.

They planned to use that to make their own names stand out.

“They’re practically coming to us to offer us a chance to raise our names. Men, put your spirit into it!”

“Yeah!”

The bandit brigade boasted high morale.

The reason was the red gem the man clenched.

In it, various close-combat-specialized skills were recorded.

It was the precious treasure handed down through the Lockwarde House for generations.

… The brigade prepared, and lay in wait for Lyle to arrive.

Chapter 14 - Full Over

In front of the remnants of an abandoned mine, I looked at the ruins of a village that had probably been abandoned quite a long time ago.

Right now, no one lived here, but the slight traces that it was inhabited remained.

“So this is the Bandits’ stronghold.”

Novem held her staff as she stood next to me. She remained wary of her surroundings.

Perhaps because we had several times the numbers of the thieves, the group had become quite lax.

“Lyle-sama, our morale is too low.”

“Yeah, that’s a problem. Of course, this time only, that’s to our advantage.”

Unprepared adventurers dressed as soldiers.

There were some yawning incessantly, and even some who were smiling and talking about how they were going to use their rewards.

Looking at them, I’ve gotten around to thinking whether I really should be giving them two silver.

While earnestly working, I didn’t even earn ten large copper.

I thought it was just a little unfair.

Now that I had completed the most mundane of requests, I could understand how extraordinary of a reward two silver was.

But, I understood that wisdom was separate from feelings.

『If you asked me to lead this bunch in battle, I would usually refuse, but… well, this time only, these guys' atmosphere is vital.』

How would the enemy make their appearance?

They must have their countermeasures already.

It took a full day for us all to reach the destination. Once the sun comes up tomorrow, we planned to launch our attack.

I look around myself.

"… Novem, don't act alone. Right… call Lockwarde-san, and fight together. There are some other female adventurers scattered here and there, so you can act alongside them."

When I said that, Novem shook her head.

"No, I will be by Lyle-sama's side. Being able to perform healing, I think I will be of use."

It looked like she planned to not leave my side.

The ancestors were also of the same opinion.

『Lyle, don't leave her. It would be troublesome if she were taken hostage. They've probably already noticed that Novem is one dear to you. More than anything, the ones around us right now… you can't trust them.』

It was just as the Fifth said.

We hurriedly gathered them around the mine, but there were enemies inside.

Of course, the ones whp noticed it were all of the ancestors.

『They're no fools. They must have some countermeasure or another. As long as they have their leader, they'll be able to take action… because of that, do you know how much trouble we went through?』

The Fifth's voice became low.

The family heads of history detested bandits. No wait, they were a headache to all feudal lords.

They were also an enemy of the people, and if they flowed into the neighboring territory, then they also became someone else's problem.

"Lyle-sama, the preparations are in order."

Novem informed me, and I nodded.

"Let's do this according to plan. To prepare for tomorrow, have everyone take a rest. Right… call only Lockwarde-san over. She probably wouldn't be satisfied with something like, 'it was over before we noticed it.'"

Novem nodded.

"Then let's go together."

I took Novem and headed for Lockwarde-san's place.

This went without saying, but the heads of history warned me against leaving Novem alone.

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Inside the mine…

"Leader! They've come. They've casually started making camp."

Hearing his subordinate's report, the large man grinned.

He tightly gripped the red gem and took up the axe he left close by in

his other hand.

It was one of his spoils of war, the weapon of a lord.

Clenching the large battle-axe, he looked at the gem tied to his left. Cloth was wrapped around it and his hand several times to make sure he didn't drop it.

"They're making light of us. We've fought plenty a time ourselves. How 'bout we teach them what a real battlefield's like?"

He said that with a smile, and the other bandits also reached for their weapons.

The ones who had infiltrated as adventurers had also returned to give a report.

All twenty seven were gathered.

"Good! We're launching a night raid!"

He made a declaration.

But a single one of his men looked down and raised a voice of surprise.

"L-leader!"

"What!?"

In the place where they had all gathered, smoke began to pour in.

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『Oh, that smoke's sure streaming out.』

While listening to the Fifth Generation's voice, I took the wooden branches and boards we took with us and set fire to them.

They had their leaves still attached, and they were of a variant of tree well-known for letting out a lot of smoke.

They also had an effect of irritating the eyes.

“Novem, is your magic alright?”

“Yes, I can still go on.”

As Novem said that, Lockwarde-san beside her opened her eyes wide and observed the situation.

“W-what is the meaning of this? Didn’t you say we were attacking tomorrow morning?”

I swung my head from side to side.

“That’s way too blatantly obvious, so once the enemy finds out, they’ll try to get the initiative. Also, the enemies that had infiltrated us already went back, so…”

The portion of the bandits that had hidden themselves in Dalien were seen through by the ancestors… mostly the third generation.

At the same time, it became clear they had other conspirators.

Through our search, I was a little surprised when the names came out, but…

“Infiltrated? Where did you learn something like that!? If you knew, shouldn’t you have captured them, or, well…”

『… When you’re crushing them, you got to do it all at once. It’s foolish to get some strange grudge on yourself by the leftovers. It was quite a waste, but that’s why Lyle put on his stupid act, and even spread the money. Oh, it looks like this isn’t the time to explain. Lyle!』

To the confused Lockwarde-san, I said there was no time to explain and drew my sabre.

『Okay, if it's about Skill Effects, I can assist you. Use pops… the Fifth generation's Skill with mine, Lyle.』

The Sixth Generation called out, and I activated the Skills.

Because of the Skill that increased my abilities from ten to twenty percent, 【Full Over】, even if was temporary, I became able to handle them.

The Fifth Generation's Skill was 【Map】.

And the Sixth Generation's Skill that he recommended me to use alongside it was 【Search】.

Map was a Skill that let one take in and observe their surroundings as a map.

Right now, I could understand the structure of the mines like the back of my hand.

Search was… one that allowed me to discover the arrangement of enemies and traps.

Both of them were extraordinary and useful Skills.

However, using them normally was an extreme expenditure of Mana. So even if I wanted to use them, it was only for a brief period of time.

I confirmed the situation around me.

It didn't seem that I could detect any traps within the mines. Only the bandit brigade was running around them.

"As I thought, they have an escape route… I'm sorry, could you go relay a message to Zelphy-san?"

The one I made a request to was an adventurer.

One who specialized in the line of collecting money for human

targets… you could also call him a bounty hunter.

“The info’s nice and accurate and all, but… could it be you have a Skill?”

The adventurer man was shocked as he heard me specify their formation.

I smile and play it off.

“Well, I wonder.”

As I said that, he apologized and hurriedly scampered off.

He was wearing a black robe, so it looked as if he disappeared into the darkness as he ran off.

“He had quite some force to him. So you hired skilled ones as well? I’m a little relieved.”

As Lockwarde-san said that, I tilted my head to the side.

“I’m not hiring him. He is helping me, though.”

“Eh?”

Lockwarde-san didn’t seem to understand it, but as she became lost in thought, Novem held up her staff. She interrupted us with magic and started preparing another spell.

The other adventurers also prepared their weapons for the approaching enemies.

“They’re quite fast… From the front, there are six of them coming.”

As I said that, those around me seemed mildly surprised, but their expressions soon turned to serious ones.

『You’re using it quite skillfully, aren’t you. Even if you can’t keep the Skill up, you use it only the instant you need it to cut consumption. I

can’t think that you just learned it a little while ago.』

The Fifth Generation praised me.

Because of Full Over’s boosts, I was able to clear the conditions to use the skills.

Using the Third and Seventh’s Skills was still impossible, but the others, if only momentarily, were possible.

“The First Generation sure is great.”

As I whispered that, I heard the First’s voice.

『So you finally get it, kid!』

『Oy, you promised to be quiet, right? Look, Lyle… in front of you.』

As the Fifth took over from the First, I prepared my sabre.

Lockwarde-san was overcome by the events going on around her, but she still held her weapon aloft. What she held was a lance unbefitting a Lady.

“Wind Bullet!”

As Novem used her magic, one of the bandits that emerged from the smoke was blown away.

She suppressed the output.

I also took on one of the bandits that cut at us.

“Y-you bastard!”

Screaming that, the one who came at me carried a dagger. It was single-edged, slightly curved, and also had some width to it.

If I received it with my slender sabre, it felt like mine would break.

Right, *if* I received it…

"Too slow."

I hit the dagger aside, destroying his stance, and like that, I propelled a kick into his stomach. This time, I wouldn't be killing them.

Because that was the contract we exchanged.

When I looked around, I saw that the bandits were being suppressed easily.

One of the bandits who had previously masqueraded as an adventurer looked at the man who tied him up and cried out.

"W-who the hell are you! I never saw someone like you with them!"

The man continued to tie the bandit up silently.

Once that was finished, he shut the bandit up with a few, well-placed punches.

"They're quite skillful. Their movements are something else. We were right to rely on her."

"Yes, Lyle-sama."

Novem was of the same opinion.

When we finished the first wave, I used the Skills again. Rather than keeping them up, using them for a short duration when I needed them was the correct choice for the current me.

"… Full Over."

After using it, I confirmed my surroundings again.

On the map that floated up in my mind, the bandits moved around in the mine…

Besides the main entrance, there were usable escape ways in the tunnels. After turning back, they had started running, aiming at another point.

But there, we already put Zelphy-san's group on standby.

Using the Skills, I checked to see if the strategy had succeeded. But from within the Jewel, I heard the Fifth's voice.

『Don't let your guard down until it's all over. If the command grows lax, the rest will follow. You can relax once you've done everything and returned to Dalien.』

I cleared my throat and concentrated.

『Right. It's fine to use the Skills in moderation, but make sure you see as much as possible. Normally, you would be confirming them constantly, but there'd be no point if you collapsed.』

I touched the Jewel to convey my thoughts of understanding.

After learning that the entrance was already blocked up by adventurers, their movements were clearly thrown into confusion.

But one presence disappeared, and their movements quickly got back into order.

『So they made an example of one. It seems it'll get troublesome from here on. The enemy's been driven to madness by the fear of death. Lyle, if restraining them becomes impossible, kill them immediately. Whether they are bandits or not, they don't look like enemies you can be negligent around.』

Hearing the Fifth's opinion, I touched the Jewel again.

The Fifth had the most experience with battling against enemies like these.

The House climbed up to viscount-hood, and he had to act as a

superior to the other territories in the region.

He answered their calls for help, and I heard there were numerous times he was forced to dispatch troops.

And when they had just climbed in rank, their relations with the territories placed below them were quite vague, or perhaps they were simply looking down on him… That was also the time when a large amount of enemies came for the Walt House.

According to the Fifth, the reason was clearly that the surrounding nobles were envious of his promotion.

Meaning the surrounding nobles had kindly deposited some harmful presences onto the Walt House's land in large quantities.

The one who crushed them all was the Fifth.

『Good grief, if they're not going to use the mines anymore, it would be easier if we just collapsed it on them. Even sealing off the entrance would have been nice.』

Leaving aside the Fifth's ominous remark, I felt some of the remaining bandits running in our direction.

The reason they didn't go in Zelphy's direction was probably because of the casualties they faced there.

Their responses from the Skill had decreased by five.

I released the Skill and waited for their arrival. As I prepared myself, the surrounding adventurers saw that and clenched their weapons as well.

Their reaction… meant that they knew I was aware of the enemy's approach. They have faith that it was the power of my Skill.

『It seems you've earned a high evaluation for yourself. Well, our family's skills are ones that are envied by everybody everywhere. Put them to good use, Lyle.』

(Yes.)

As I answered that in my head, the bandits burst out of the slightly-parting smoke with desperate looks in their eyes.

Within them, a large man toting an axe emerged.

『That's definitely the bandit brigade's boss… Lyle.』

Hearing the Fifth say that, I started towards the man without using any Skills. The desperate bandits also found their own opponents in the people around me.

They probably don't have the leisure to lend me a hand.

"Lyle-sama!"

Novem lifted up her staff in order to use magic.

But I blocked her with my voice.

"I'll do it!"

As the large man heard that, he openly knit his brow, and he flourished the axe in one of his hands.

The axe that looked like it would require two hands was easily handled by him.

No matter how much muscle he may have, the way he wielded his weapon gave me an uneasy feeling.

"A brat shouldn't try showing off, oy!"

I dodged his horizontal swing by jumping backwards. I led the charging giant into a hard-to-maneuver-in formation of trees.

But…

"Naïve!! I have this with me!"

Saying that, he thrust his left fist towards me. From the gaps between his fingers, a red light poured out.

“The gem?”

Hearing me say that, the large man spoke up with pride.

“That’s right! What’s more, it’s a first class one with multiple Skills in it! You’ll be minced in no time! I mean…”

The battle axe he swung collided with a tree. Normally, it should have come to a stop there, but without slowing, the tree was cut down.

He had felled a tree in one strike.

“There’s a Skill to increase my weapon’s strength! This gem teaches me how to use Skills! It’s the best!”

Just raising the weapons strength doesn’t allow you to swing it single-handedly.

Just as I thought, he probably has a number of troublesome skills in that.

“A Skill to enhance my muscles! And from the edge…”

『Oy! Jump to one side!』

The First let out his voice. I wasn’t within his range, but I immediately jumped.

From the axe he lowered, a shockwave flew out. A number of trees were split in its path, displaying its power.

“Tsk, you’ve got good instinct on ya’. That was a Skill to send a shockwave. But still… this next one’s amazing.”

The large man grinned. He smiled, and then, he suddenly disappeared from my sight.

I immediately heard a voice from above, so I leapt from where I was. But the impact itself destroyed my stance, and I rolled across the ground.

What I saw before I rolled was a scene of the ground having been gouged out. It wasn't something I could think of as that man's doing.

I used the momentum from my roll to stand, but I saw the man approaching before my eyes.

"Next's an outrageous one called Slash. This one's speed and destructive power are five times my usual!!"

I saw the man's battle axe coming down on me.

The attack that approached me at an amazing speed was something that had come from a Skill.

From around me, I heard voices.

"Lyle-sama!!"
"Lyle!"

Novem and Lockwarde-san called out to me.

In the next instant, the First Generation's face came to mind. With his arms folded, the form of him sitting in the meeting room's chair was, despite his barbaric attire, awe-inspiring.

And a grin began to form on his mouth.

『What are you waiting for… get him, Lyle!!』

Chapter 15 - Limit Burst

『Go get him, Lyle!!』

As I heard the First Generation's voice, I smiled at the approaching axe head.

Looking at my expression, the large man probably thought I had gone mad, or perhaps he just didn't notice my face…

But with this, the match was settled.

"Limit Burst."

Full Over was a skill that raised all of one's abilities by a fixed margin, and Limit Burst was one that allowed you to surpass your body's limit.

But because of the violent recoil of such an action, it evened it out by healing the body simultaneously.

At the same time I activated the Skill, I felt the time flowing around me pass at a different rate than usual.

It had become severely slower, and my intuition felt honed.

I used my left hand to pull out the sabre I kept as a reserve, and like that, I used the two of my swords to parry the blow.

The moment the metal clashed, sparks rose from my blades, and the impact rocked my body.

I ignored that, and moved with the force to twist my body to deliver a kick. I aimed for the skull.

"Wha…"

He wasn't sent airborne, but after falling back, the Large Man's body

was unsteady, having taken a hit to the head.

"That's quite a convenient Skill you have there. I'm jealous."

Saying that, the man took a stance with his axe.

I don't know if it was because of the effects of another Skill, or because the man himself was strong against physical impacts. It could be either, or neither.

He continued to swing his axe left and right while attacking me. For some reason, he was raising a loud voice.

But that wasn't a sound to threaten an enemy.

He probably understood that in that moment, my body's movements had changed. At the same time, the strike he had been saving to finish me was ineffective.

Discovering that his trump card didn't work, perhaps he became impatient.

"You monsteeerr!!"

While thinking of how cruel it was to call anyone you couldn't beat a monster, I used my two sabres to parry again and drove in a kick.

One of them felt like it was going to break.

(The effect of a Skill… amazing.)

This time, the kick was sent to his stomach.

Having fallen to his knees, the man looked at me with a face as if he had seen something unbelievable.

"Why? I have enhanced speed and power. Against a delicate girly guy like you, why…"

He definitely had the Skill effects and greater power.

I'm pretty sure my speed was the higher of us, though.

Of course, as long as you could control Mana, you could raise your power as high as you wanted. Since I also had that sort of training hammered into me, I couldn't really call him all too powerful.

He was just temporarily raising his strength.

There was an overwhelming deficiency in technique.

I identified the surrounding presences with Skills and felt the rest of the bandits had already been apprehended.

All that was left was the large man before my eyes.

As I approached, he discarded his axe and raised his hands. And to me, he petitioned.

"W-wait! I-I've taken a liking to you! If it's with you, I think I'll be able to dream big! So, so how about taking me as your subordinate? If so, I don't care if you use my men as soldiers, or anything you like."

He did a complete flip of personality, and he started to display a weak manner.

Looking at the axe, it wasn't within range of his hands.

But the First spoke.

『Oy, this is a crafty one. Those guys that have a cowardly face often…』

Perhaps because he noticed me shifting my eyes for a moment, he took out a concealed knife and entered a position to use a Skill.

The Gem in his left hand let off a faint light.

He directed a vulgar smile in my direction.

“Dumbass!”

『… Have a weapon or two hidden somewhere on their person.』

The Fifth Generation let out a fed up voice.

『Couldn’t you have said that a little earlier?』
『Are you a fool? This is more than enough time for Lyle.』

By the time I heard the First’s voice, I was already launching a flying kick on the enemy.

Because I hit his jaw with a rising kick, the Skill ended in a misfire.

When I looked around, I was surrounded by adventurers.

Based on their looks of relief, it looks like they thought I would fall victim to a surprise attack.

I thought I was being careful, but perhaps I wasn’t paying enough attention.

(I was saved by the First’s Skill. And wait, this Limit Burst… It’s also an extraordinary one.)

There was a limit to consecutive usage, and they all had their quirks, but they were all useful.

I released the Skill and looked at the unconscious man.

『I guess that’s about it. Lyle, before you turn him in, his left hand…』

On the Fifth’s words, I released the Skill, went up to the unconscious man, and forcefully ripped away the cloth wrapped around his left hand before retrieving the gem.

The red gem gave off a faint glitter.

(Somehow, I get the feeling this one is much more useful.)

Looking at it, I turned my head to the blue Jewel shimmering on my chest.

The Jewel that constantly complained and even put restrictions on my Skill use.

In contrast, this gem didn't select its wielder, taught one how to use Skills, and let them use them freely.

If you asked which one I wanted to choose, I have a strong inclination to choose the latter.

『… Oy, that kinda hurts.』

Maybe the First sensed what I wanted to say with his feral instincts, as he let out a soft voice.

Novem and Lockwarde-san rushed to my side.

The bandit troupe's boss was surrounded and tied up by the adventurers.

"Lyle-sama… splendid performance."

Novem's eyes were a little teary, but she still directed a smile at me.

Lockwarde-san looked over me hastily.

She probably wanted to say something, looking at the red gem in my possession, but because she didn't really do anything herself, she couldn't work herself up to say it.

(An awkward person she is.)

As I thought that, I heard voices from the adventurers.

"Oy, this is quite serious."
"Blood's coming out of his body. Is this the recoil of his Skills?"
"Well, there's no problem long as he's alive. Oy, we're carrying him off."

As I turned around, I saw blood spurting out of the bandit leader's body. On the large man, the adventurers applied medicine to heal the wounds.

(Well, yeah, it would be troublesome if he dies.)

Overuse of Skills. It looks like his body couldn't keep up with them

(I understand when I look at that, but there's reasons the ancestors put usage restrictions on my Skills.)

Looking at the bleeding man, I reminded myself to be careful with that in times to come.

And this time, Lockwarde-san called out.

"U-um…"

With an exceedingly troubled expression, She shifted her eyes to and from the gem and my face.

Looking at that, Novem spoke to me.

"Lyle-sama, it's time for you to fulfill your objective."

Hearing that, I handed over the gem in my hand. I wanted to toss it over, but when I thought about it, it was a precious family heirloom.

It was better to give it by hand.

Lockwarde-san received it by clenching both of her hands around mine and the gem. She looked at my face and burst into tears.

With her bright red face, she looked like she wanted to offer her thanks.

"Um, well, I didn't really do much, but…"

As her words weren't coming out, Novem spoke to her kindly.

“Please accept it. That was Lyle-sama’s desire. That’s right, right Lyle-sama?”

She laughed to herself as she sought confirmation from me, and I scratched my finger in embarrassment and averted my eyes.

“Well, how should I put this… I’ve accomplished my objective. So there’s no problem. More importantly…”

“T-thank…”

Lockwarde-san tried to squeeze out some thanks, but she couldn’t get it all out.

An adventurer approached us, so I turned towards him.

“I’m sorry for getting in the way. But this’s also our job.”

“No, thank you. We’re the ones who’ve been helped here.”

Saying that, he took off his hood.

He was a male with sharp eyes and an atmosphere that indicated he wasn’t one to be trifled with.

Rather than bounty hunting, this was an adventurer with a friendly attitude towards their feudal lord.

Based on ability and character, he was a dependable adventurer.

However, he wasn’t one of Dalien.

I asked Zelphy-san and received their cooperation.

For that sake, I confirmed with the Guild whether or not that would become a problem. Hawkins-san made a difficult face before saying I couldn’t do it openly.

That’s like giving tacit consent, right? More importantly, I was

worried about whether or not they would really assist us.

(If Zelphy-san truly wanted to save Lockwarde-san, I thought she would assertively ask for their cooperation, and it looks like I was right.)

The adventurer made a relieved face.

“No we’ve also been helped plenty. With this, these guys will be judged on our land. The feudal lord will likely rejoice.”

Right, they were from the lands where these bandits ran rampant. Skilled adventurers from those parts took place in our bandit subjugation.

“From the treasure they’ve piled up, we’d like to look for the items we’re searching for as well. I’m sorry for a rush, but I’d like you to bear witness of that.”

Hearing that, I nodded.

『Right, right, at times like this, you have to move quickly. It’s because the job’s not over yet. Let’s explain the situation to the adventurers from Dalien as well. There may be some who go after the treasure of their own desire otherwise.』

I heard the cheerful Third Generation’s voice.

Since I was supposed to bear witness, I asked the adventurer for an explanation.

『For us to be relying on adventurers..』

It looks like the Seventh didn’t rely on them in his time.

The Third answered him in a tired tone.

『Even I had a few adventurers I was on good terms with… Well, it’s not like I don’t get where you’re coming from. They have their best and their worst.』

We weren’t lacking in skilled men for our job.

“That axe as well. It belonged to one of the Feudal Lord’s mistress’s sons. His relatives were looking for it. I know you have the right to it, so they should give out quite a price for it.”

I looked at the battle axe the large man used.

It definitely was a splendid piece.

I didn’t need it, so I left the pricing to him.

“I don’t mind. We’ll go with whatever sum they present. Now then, shall we go confirm the rest of them?”

“It’s good that you’re so understanding. But are you sure? I’m pretty sure they said it was something like a precious inherited heirloom, you know? It would be possible to inflate the price quite a bit.”

Hearing that, I turned my eyes to Lockwarde-san, startling her.

“… Well, I’m not in that sort of mood (I’ve already fulfilled what I set out to do. I don’t have a reason exhibit any more desire).”

“I see. Then this way. We haven’t touched it yet, so it’s still in the mines. Also, I’ll tell the client about the axe memento. They’ll definitely be overjoyed.”

“Even so… well, I’ll leave it to you.”

It’s best if I didn’t say anything unnecessary, right? That’s what I thought, so I just left it all to the other side’s good will.

I headed into the mines with the adventurer.

Novem followed me. Lockwarde-san saw me off.

More than that, she was probably frozen, unsure of what she wanted to say.

Perhaps she was spacing out from relief.

『Splendid. Truly splendid. To Alice-san's descendants, I returned Alice-san's gem… god dammit, the tears are coming out.』

It sounds like the First Generation was crying.

Looking at that, the Second fired off a line.

『Why is it that the sight of a middle aged man crying is so unsightly? Does it look like that precisely *because* you're our founder?』
『You bastard! What do you think your saying when I'm over here feeling it!? Let's take this outside!』
『And as I was saying, we're stuck here! Why don't you learn a bit, you barbarian!?』

It was their usual exchange, but…

(Oy, stop! I'm tired after finishing a battle… ah, the dizziness is…)

As I swayed a little, Novem immediately supported my body.

"Lyle-sama!?"

"Oy, oy, you alright? Well, you did work that hard. You could rest a little…"

"N-no… I can hang on for a little longer (You both need to learn!!)"

They didn't shut up until the end.

This was my usual pattern, but I'm starting to hate it.

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On top of a rattling cart…

Locked up in iron bars, the bandits were thrust onto three narrow-looking carts.

Leaving the territory of Dalien, they had no idea they were being sent off to the lands where they were notorious.

“Dammit all, we didn’t even do anything yet!”
“Right! We haven’t done anything in this territory!”
“We’ll get released soon enough! And steal it all back.”

The bandits let out some selfish lines, but the adventurers around them were all smiles.

It didn’t seem they were laughing at the lines the bandits were selfishly throwing out. It looked like they knew what was in store for them.

Seeing that, the large man felt a sense of discomfort.

“Oy, these guys are Dalien adventurers, right?”

He rubbed his aching chin as he asked one of his subordinates. It was one of the ones who gathered information in Dalien as an adventurer.

“Never seen him before.”

Being told that, the large man surveyed his surroundings.

“… Just where are we headed? For us to have been taken beyond Dalien’s borders, what’s the meaning of this?”

Hearing that, one of the adventurers approached the iron bars.

Atop a horse, he observed the bandits as he spoke.

“When did we ever say we were from Dalien? You guys are going to receive proper judgement in the territories you made a mess of.”

The bandit troupe’s faces suddenly went pale.

A country where the feudal lords held great power. That was the

Bahnseim Kingdom.

While they all shared a connection, each land was shaped by its lord's will.

For that reason, criminals that crossed borders were often regretfully left at large.

Though if they went too far, some famous bounty hunter or another would come for their heads.

"W-what do you mean!? We were in Dalien! There's no reason you should be taking us!"

Looking at their confused leader, his surrounding subordinates became even more panicked.

The adventurers' smiles widened.

"We merely happened to capture you all after you coincidentally crossed over to our territory. Because Dalien's adventurers coincidentally drove you all the way here, we who were coincidentally in the area took the initiative, and arrested you. Good grief, this is troubling. Those guys in Dalien… we've gotten ourselves in quite a debt."

The adventurers had each taken on varied requests.

I want you to return my valuables stolen by the bandit troupe.

I want you to take down my family's enemy.

They had taken on those various requests all at once, and rushed over to Dalien to participate in the Bandit Subjugation mission.

The one who got in contact with those adventurers linked to the feudal lord was Zelphy.

"D-don't screw with me! Why did it turn out like this!? Because we're the villains here? Then there should be greater bastards out there for you!"

It was just as the large man said.

The bandits' sins amounted to nothing but light crimes in the eyes of a true villain.

Of course, compared to true villains, that was.

Their sins were still quite heavy.

They assaulted villages and even burned them to the ground. They launched attacks on the mansions of the lords governing the villages. To the women, they…

They had piled up various crimes.

But the lord of the land where they did such things was unable to lay hands on them once they fled. At this rate, the lord's honor was being crushed.

The dissatisfaction of the fief would pile up, at their unreliable lord.

"As if I know. Your luck was bad this time. Also, even if you tell me that after you've rampaged for so long… We even have adventurers here from the villages you guys raided, you know?"

Hearing that, the large man looked around.

Among the smiling faces, there were a few who weren't smiling at all.

They were holding up the weapons in their hands.

"W-we're going to be judged, right? If you kill us here…"

"Hah? The hell you talking about? … Even if there's one or two less, if you're tried, it'll be group execution, right? We just have to keep a reasonable number of you alive."

… All of the bandits' faces went pale.

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Having returned to Dalien, we released the personnel we had gathered up and returned the tools and carts we borrowed to the appropriate merchants.

Of the treasure the bandits hoarded up, we returned a majority of them, so if you discount the payments, we have what would amount to around sixty gold coins.

(Normally, we'd be deep in the red. Even if we subjugated them, if you think of all the various problems that'll crop up, the lord here's head must be hurting.)

In case the requested assistance fell through, we did hire some skilled adventurers from Dalien as well, just in case.

For that, we expended quite a bit of money.

It was a pain to search for the place the bandits liquidated their stolen assets, so I left most of that to the adventurers.

Everything ended, and all that was left was to report to the guild.

"With this, we can finally put a period on the matter."

I stretched my body.

"Good job, Lyle-sama. Even so, just what was your real goal there?"

As Novem asked, I was troubled over just what it was I should respond.

Should I divulge the truth of my ancestors' wills in the Jewel, or should I stay silent?

(No, I should take the opportunity to tell her. She already saw me use

those Skills in that previous battle, so it's not like I'm lacking in persuasive evidence…)

Then, pulling a horse, Zelphy-san appeared.

"Nice work, you two."

"T-thank you for your work, Zelphy-san."

As Novem said that, I also gave a light reply.

"Now let's go hit the baths before dropping by the guild. Boss Hawkins is definitely waitin' in worry."

As Zelphy-san said that, an image of a worried-looking Hawkins-san floated up in my head.

We hadn't known each other for long, but he truly was a good person.

"Yeah, let's. Also, Zelphy-san, you have some business with us as well, right?"

On my words, Zelphy-san widened her eyes.

She scratched her hair and averted her eyes.

"… Well, well, I thought you were a weak brat, but you turned out to be quite the amazin' kid, you know."

Letting out a sigh, she spoke to us.

"After droppin' by the Guild, let's go to the lord's manor together. There are some things you guys're better off knowin'."

Saying that, she corrected her position on the horse and left.

Novem directed a smile at me.

"When did you notice it? That Zelphy-san was an adventurer affiliated with Dalien's feudal lord?"

Hearing her words, I raised both of my hands to signal my surrender.

“Probably later than you, Novem. Also, I didn’t notice it by my own ability.”

『Right, I’m the one who noticed it. No, I mean, she was skilled, and she was able to gather information in the blink of an eye. It was only around the, ‘hey, isn’t this girl just a bit suspicious?’ level, but when that Aria girl came out, it became gradually clearer…』
『That’s enough. This conversation isn’t getting anywhere.』

The Third started to brag, but the Fourth stopped him.

“I just thought she was a little suspicious. From the time that Hawkins-san recommended her as our advisor. Of course, I think we would have gotten Zelphy-san even if we paid a smaller fee.”

“You suspected her from the beginning!?”

“I mean, they recommended us an advisor when we clearly had some peculiar circumstances surrounding us. Also, while the system existed, they didn’t openly recommend it to the other applicants.”

Looking at her laughing to herself, I began to question why she paid such a high fee in that case.

Having sensed that, Novem offered an explanation.

“It’s because I thought that advisers would advise their best when money was involved. In order to achieve Lyle-sama’s ambitions, I determined it wasn’t the best place to economize.”

“Really? (My ambition? Wait, did I say anything like that to her?)”

There were a few parts I couldn’t understand, but there was a need to report to the guild, so Novem and I headed for the baths.

We had a few days’ worth of grime on us, so there was also the reason of us wanting to wash it off quickly.

(… Even so, my ambition? I don't remember saying anything like that, and… becoming an adventurer was just kinda how it ended up, or should I say, it was just because I couldn't think of anything else to do.)

Chapter 16 - Lyle's Ambition

Dalien's feudal lord's mansion.

It was our second visit, but the atmosphere around it was a little different this time around.

Last time I was playing the fool, but as we were coming directly from the guild, I was dressed in rough attire.

Usually, I would've changed, but Zelphy-san told me to hurry.

And as we entered the gates and crossed inside the estate alongside her, Ventra-san was waiting for us.

(I see, so they want to hasten the process.)

Making her client wait probably put a little stress on Zelphy-san's mind.

To Ventra-san, who was drinking tea and greeting us with a smile, I offered my salutations.

"I am deeply grateful for you holding this audience with…"

"Let's do without such formalities. Right now, I'm meeting Lyle-dono, the adventurer."

I wonder if that means he decided not to accept my return as the heir.

(Has he heard from Zelphy-san?)

The moment she learned I was from the Walt House, Zelphy-san likely made a report.

(She probably got curious and investigated when she saw me use magic or something.)

Today's charge, the Seventh Generation, gave an evaluation of him.

『I see. Looks like he's not as he seems. How splendid.』

As we sat on the sofa, Ventra asked what he wanted to know.

That was the true goal of this visit.

"I've heard from Zelphy. That you two weren't particularly aiming to return to nobility, and that you were truly trying to live as adventurers. But you seemed to be moving along quite a different pretense during this case. If you wanted to sell your names, you should have moved in with an elite group during that mission. Right now, you're being called an 『Idiotic Former Noble Brat』 , you know?"

From my actions, I already understood that the surroundings would see me as such.

I matched their numbers several time fold to subjugate a single bandit troupe, and I even paid all the wages for it. There were many, many more efficient ways to go about doing it.

Normally, I would be in a huge deficit. As an adventurer, and as the son of a noble, there was no helping it if they called me a fool.

However, I fulfilled my own objectives, and on top of that, rather than going into the reds, I even earned sixty gold coins on top of that.

It's enough of a plus.

"Ah, that was for my own benefit."

"So you say there was personal gain for you in this time's subjugation?"

Hearing that, the Seventh gave a subdued whisper.

『It was to release the conditions for a Skill. Even if you say it, I doubt he'd understand, though.』

That was exactly the case.

I agreed with the Seventh's opinion.

And of all things, Zelphy-san brought up Lockwarde-san's name.

"Could it be that Lady Aria's request moved your hearts? No, perhaps ulterior motives?"

"Eh? No, something like that is…"

It was only for a moment, but Zelphy-san directed an immense glare at me. Perhaps she was telling me to go along with it.

The Seventh Generation gave a grunt of affirmation, before offering some advice.

『Lyle, just go with that. It would be a pain if the First Generation started acting up about Aria again.』

Without knowing what was going on, I affirmed it.

"W-well… it's that, you know… right?"

As I gave a vague response, I took a fleeting glance at Novem.

She wasn't angry or anything. She was just drinking tea.

(Okay, Novem understands the flow of this! No, wait, if someone looked on from the outside, they would definitely think I worked for Lockwarde-san's sake.)

Having thought that, I matched Zelphy-san's accusation, and offered a vague response to Ventra-sama

"I see, so I guess it just means Lyle-dono is a man as well. No, it sure is wonderful to be young. Be faithful to your desires."

He was smiling, but I didn't feel like I was being praised at all.

Without me being able to alter the flow, the matter ended as me performing the bandit subjugation mission for the sake of Lockwarde-san, who I took a liking to at a glance.

(That's kinda unpleasant in itself. I wonder what Novem is thinking.)

I took another glance at her, but she didn't seem angry in the slightest.

I was afraid of whether she was seriously fed up in her deeper thoughts, but there were no signs of that either.

"Fumu. If that be the case, then would you be fine if your reward is settled as Lady Aria?"

"… Reward?"

Ventra-san nodded.

"In this matter, because of Lyle-dono, I was able to benefit. If you desire Lady Aria, then I'll leave her disposal to you. I mean, the current head of the Lockwarde House was found to have ties to the bandit troupe, of all things."

From their actions up until now, Ventra-san assumed they had conspirators and investigated based on that it seemed.

As a result, they had found some connections leading towards the Lockwarde House.

Having learned that, Lockwarde-san was in quite a bit of shock.

"A gem holding multiple skills truly isn't an item for today's era. However, if they sold such a thing to a bandit troupe, they should have been able to understand what sort of matter would result. If they aided them as well… we have no choice but to punish them."

He probably had to make an example of just what would happen if you aided enemies of the state.

And wait…

『S-sold, you say… Lyle! Right now, go beat the hell out of that Lockwarde House's head! Doing something like selling Alice-san's gem is going down the wrong path as a human being!

And as always, the Second restrained the First.

『And you went down the wrong path as a human parent. And wait, listen to what they're saying. It's about what'll happen to your all-important Lady Aria, isn't is?』
『Ah, right!』

The ancestors shut up, and I looked at Ventra-san.

"Naturally, as part of the family, Lady Aria will have to take some responsibility as well in the matter. Even more so now that only the father and daughter remain. Good grief… even when Zelphy said she would lend me her aid only if I let them continue to live here."

"If I may be so rude, just what is it that the Lockwarde House did?"

As Novem asked that, Zelphy-san covered her face with her left hand and explained.

"Used their status as officers, had connections with criminals, and overlooked their sins. Because of that, the Lockwarde House's reputation fell to the earth. Of course, the current head's use of money was always rough. My father was driven out, and so we had to leave the capital and come to Dalien."

Ventra-san took over her explanation.

"A knight driven out draws quite a few chastising eyes, so it was probably hard to live in Centralle. It looks like Zelphy-san's house probably went through quite a bit of trouble. I mean, a knight became an adventurer to support her family."

From there, Zelphy-san had an expression no words could describe on her face.

“Lady Aria watched the fall of the Lockwarde House with her own eyes. On top of that, she learned they were connected to the bandit brigade.”

“That is…”

Novem cut off her voice.

If a house can be raised in a generation, it can be crushed in a generation as well.

(Though I’m not really one to speak of that.)

The Seventh Generation spoke.

『Was the House’s achievements up until now the reason the clan or people concerned weren’t executed ? In my generation, they would all be sent to the gallows, you know? No, was the Lockwarde House in the Royal Faction? Perhaps it was the king’s benevolence.』

It seems there were some circumstances surrounding the matter.

Even I was banished, and if Zell and Novem weren’t there, I may have bled to death on the streets somewhere.

I couldn’t think of this as someone else’s problem.

It was because Zell picked me up that I obtained the Jewel.

“… So what is going to happen to the Lockwarde House?”

As I asked, Ventra-san’s face turned serious.

Their troublemaking was tolerated until now. But they sold off an orb that contained multiple skills to enemies for paltry change.

On top of that, they assisted them and even helped them slip into Dalien.

I doubt he had any intention to let them off.

“Because of Zelphy-san’s request, I let them stay in Dalien, but that has its limits. Having lost their rank and position, there was already enough demerits to keeping those troublesome presences in itself.”

As they were driven out of Centralle, the Lockwarde House moved into Dalien.

It was easy to live in and a territory close to the capital.

But for an officer that had connections to criminals, Dalien likely wouldn’t accept them either.

Zelphy-san was quite the loyal one, I see.

“It’s true that they had connections and drew the bandits into Dalien. If we investigated, I wonder just what other deeds would surface as well…”

The gem that was thought of as stolen was simply sold off.

And along with conspiring… the Lockwarde Head’s sins were heavy.

“The head will be sent to work in the mine. Originally, Lady Aria would be left alone with nothing but her figure and her age, so perhaps she would have to become a harlot in another land.”

Being put to hard work in the mines as a slave.

And the path of a harlot was what awaited Lockwarde-san.

“But I didn’t want to dispose of the brave daughter in a way like that. No, if you pursue her, Lyle-dono, I’ll leave her to you.”

Looking at Ventra-san’s smile, I tilted my head.

“… Eh?”

Zelphy-san energetically hit my shoulder.

“Isn’t that great, Lyle! I mean, you’ve got a beauty like Lady Aria.

Truly great. Ahahahahah!”

“Eh, wait a second… eh?”

She forcefully closed the conversation, and it doesn’t look like anyone here was going to listen to what I have to say.

I looked towards Novem for help.

And she…

“You’ve done it, Lyle-sama. With this, you’re one step closer to fulfilling your dream.”

“Eh? Dream? Eh? Eh!? What?”

Within my confusion, the talks proceeded forward.

『O-oy… what is the meaning of this?』

The First was bewildered.

The Second was in a similar state.

『Eh? No… that’s where you should be helping him, right!? Hey, match the pace, and help Lyle make sure that Aria girl doesn’t end up as a prostitute!』

But the Third differed.

『Really? Is seems that everyone has their own motives here…』

The fourth was troubled by Novem’s reaction.

『Novem-chan, open your eyes! This end is no good!』

The Fifth offered a complaint to Ventra-san.

『This Lord, as payback for having been fooled by Lyle, he intends to push Aria onto him. This sly one’s probably roaring with laughter in his

head after seeing Lyle so troubled.』

It looks like the Sixth had taken a liking to Zelphy-san.

『Even for that Zelphy adventurer girl, she sure was desperate. But still, Novem's reaction was unexpected.』

The Seventh Generation didn't seem to mind it all too much.

『It's because Novem's a daughter of the Forxuz House, so perhaps she doesn't really mind if he has a side mistress or two? And wait, From my point of view, shouldn't we be more worried about Lyle?』

I understood I had no allies here.

Of all things, when my eyes met those of the guard standing beside the lord, he broke into a grin.

(… I-I was set up? B-but why?)

I don't think there was a problem in my train of thought that Zelphy-san could have just taken Lockwarde-san under her in an instant.

Even so, it ended up that I was taking her.

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Having returned to the rented house for the first time in a while, I confronted Novem.

Preparing food would be a pain, so we got that over with outside.

I already entered the bath and brushed my teeth.

(I-I have to put my spirit into it!)

I got my breathing in order and tried to convey my feelings.

This wasn't because the ancestors told me to.

To the girl that always supported me, I wanted to give an answer to her feelings.

More than anything… I liked Novem.

I was starting to sweat from nervousness. The words weren't coming out as well as I wanted.

"Novem… I love you. As hopeless as I am, I'd like it if you married me."

"Lyle-sama… I'm happy."

Novem covered her mouth with both of her hands. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes were teary.

"Y-yeah! So you see… um… I like Novem, and I don't have any romantic feelings towards Lockwarde-san or anything. That previous matter was more of one to somehow save her, I think."

I felt like a hopeless man making an excuse for cheating, but getting my feelings to Novem across was my first priority.

But the ancestors were noisy.

I'd like it if they could read the mood and shut their mouths.

The First and Second said…

『What a hopeless remark… You've got to settle it clearly.』
『From you, who wasn't even able to talk to your first love, you've not a fragment of persuasive power there.』

Novem, it was enough if you alone were by my side… I wanted to say that.

“So I’d like it if you always stayed by my side. Together, I think it would be nice if we lived like that, you know…”

『Well, your confession hasn’t really locked itself in place. And wait, I think it would be best if you made more of an atmosphere there. You’ve got to give a present, or select the location carefully, or else…』

The Third judged me.

I knew. But if I didn’t say it here and now, I get the feeling the situation will become irreversible.

Wiping her tears with a finger, Novem spoke.

“Thank you, Lyle-sama… but…”

(B-but? Wait, does that mean I’m being rejected? S-she said she was happy, didn’t she?)

“For those that call themselves men; it isn’t right for you to give up on your dreams so easily. You wanted to become an adventurer, and live a willful life being waited on by women… To realize that dream, you have to steadily increase your influence. In order to actualize Lyle-sama’s dream, as I thought, you will have to become a first class adventurer.”

As Novem said that, I was unable to comprehend her meaning.

A first class adventurer?

I just became an adventurer to secure the necessary provisions to live, and I hadn’t really decided my future that far down the line.

“… What?”

『Lyle! So you had an ambition like that!?』

I heard the Fourth Generation’s angry voice.

But I had no memory of saying something like that. In the first place, it wasn’t like I was fixated on being an adventurer or anything.

Novem continued on.

“I am aware of the Walt Family Precepts. Surely, Aria-san is one worthy of being a woman of the Walt House. So please include her in your harem without any further delay.”

Novem’s statement shocked the First.

『W-what was that…』

“Stop. Novem, please stop.”

And wait, it wasn’t like I wanted a Harem or…

While I was thinking that, the Third spoke up.

『Ah! Lyle, you did say it! Come to think of it, you did say something like that!』

(Like hell I did! And running after other women in front of Novem, who works herself so hard for my sake, I’m not that much of an idiot!)

“I didn’t say that. I never said anything like that.”

“Lyle-sama?”

While Novem tilted her head, the Third Generation continued on.

『See, that time at the start! Before you knew about our existence, you said those exact words to Novem atop the cart!』

Hearing that, the Fourth Generation remembered.

『So it was then!』

In confusion, the Second generation confirmed it.

『B-but that was just to get Novem-chan to return to her House, right? What? Isn’t it strange for Novem-chan to have not caught onto that?』

After they said that much, I started to remember.

I tried to disillusion her and send her back to her House.

【I have no such will. I'll become an adventurer and live a willful life being waited on by women. Being driven away by my family actually makes me feel relieved.】

"Hot damn, I did!!"

Having remembered it, I let out a confused scream, and Novem put her hand on my shoulder in worry.

"Lyle-sama!? What could be the matter, Lyle-sama!"

The First spoke in a low voice.

『Y-you… despite being a wimp, you had ambitions like that.』

To the First, the Second…

『Follow the flow of the conversation! She got herself to believe the lie that Lyle spouted!』

The Third Generation was a little lost in thought.

『But still, I can't think that Novem-chan didn't notice something like that, though?』

The Fourth judged me further.

『Lyle! What are you going to do from here on out!? Even when you have Novem-chan, are you going to welcome that Aria girl? It's obvious that you're going to choose one!』

To the Fourth, the First shouted.

『Are you making fun of the living likeness of Alice-san!? You damn glasses, let's take this outside!』

The Fifth seemed to be of the same opinion as the Third.

The Sixth gave Novem the following appraisal.

『So Novem is that… the type of woman where if you take one step off the path, she raises a first class loser.』

The Seventh remained unconcerned.

『Lyle is the former heir of a Count House. What's more, he's a chosen existence that carries royal blood on him, isn't he? This may be due to the Forxuz House's teachings, but don't make such a fuss over a mistress or two.』

On the Seventh's opinion, the Sixth gave a soft reply.

『… You, you say something like that when you only had one wife alone.』

The Seventh fired back.

『Looking at Father(the Sixth) and Grandfather(The Fifth), there's no way in hell I want a Harem. Well, if it's Novem, she'll properly manage such domestic matters, so there's no problem.』

(More importantly, why don't you guys put out some good ideas to help me resolve this situation!?)

To correct her misunderstanding, I stood and grabbed both of her shoulders.

I ignore those unreliable guys and resolved myself.

"Novem!"
"Y-yes!"

I get my breathing in order.

And I stared into her violet eyes.

“I don’t want a harem. As long as I have you, that’s enough!”

“Lyle-sama… I deeply apologize.”

In order to avoid any misconceptions, I made sure to say it clearly.

I knew that a vague response wouldn’t get me anywhere.

Even so…

“Eh?”

Novem offered her apologies, and the bell fastened on the door rung out.

“I already called Aria-san over. She was without a place to stay, and Zelphy-san was living with her fiancé, so she said she couldn’t take her in.”

“What about my opinion!?”

This was the first I’d ever heard of Zelphy-san’s fiancé, but more importantly, I need to deal with Lockwarde-san.

“And so, I am deeply sorry. Ah, I’ll go out to meet her.”

As she separated from me, Novem looked like she was smiling a little.

Like a mischievous child, that sort of happiness.

(W-what does this mean?)

I sat down on the spot and squatted, as I put both hands to my head.

I have a woman who had been by my side for so long, and I’m bringing a new woman to the house.

Looking from the sidelines, I’m definitely a hopeless man. There’s nothing I could say about it.

“I really have no hope, do I!!?”

And there, the Fourth’s words stabbed into me.

『Ha? No matter how you look at it, you were hopeless from the start.』

Epilogue

『It's time for the first Lyle-less family meeting~.』

The Fourth Generation Head frivolously signaled the start of the meeting to the rest of those gathered.

They usually didn't do something like that, but they decided to meet without Lyle to discuss what would happen from here on.

『Now then, let's put Novem-chan's matter aside for now, and decide what Lyle's to do henceforth.』

As the Fourth said that, the Third interjected.

『Shouldn't we leave that aside, too? I mean, Lyle doesn't have a clear idea of what he's aiming for.』

The Sixth was the same, but he also inserted his own hopes.

『Right. Of course, from my point of view, I'd like it if he went and succeeded the Walt House already.』

The Seventh agreed.

Generally, the Sixth and Seventh had coinciding opinions.

Both of them adhered to the best interest of the territory.

『If that Celes succeeds it, then they'll have to bring in a groom from another family. Everyone here should find such a fact unbearable.』

The First Generation picked his nose as he responded.

『Not really.』

On that opinion, the Seventh and Sixth, as well as the Second and Fourth, glared at him.

『On having all the land built up stolen from us, don't you feel irritated at all!?』

The Seventh displayed his resentment, and the Third massaged his temple as he continued.

『Try remembering why the First started all of this. I don't want to admit it, but he was able to accomplish his goal, so he isn't really all that interested, I presume.』

The First denied the Third's opinion.

『You fool! Even I had my hardships expanding the territory. Unlike you guys, I did it by my own sweat and blood. Even I have things I ponder over! But when I look at Lyle, you know…』

The Second quietly added on.

『Those tears are your tears at having your first love married off to another, aren't they.』

The First choked and coughed for a while before continuing.

It seems those words were on the mark.

『I know I called him frail, and the like, but he definitely does have talent. No, more so, I don't get how he's still so wimpy-looking after he does so much.』

The one who answered that was the Fifth.

He didn't seem to have any interest in the conference. Because of that, perhaps his words were the most level-headed.

『Perhaps after being shunned at the age of ten, Lyle didn't undergo the training plan we followed, or perhaps his training had stagnated in itself. It doesn't look like he was taught the important things, but… Oy, has the education system been altered from my time?』

The Fifth looked at the Sixth and Seventh.

After the Fifth became a viscount, he went through much hardship to ensure that the Sixth and Seventh could obtain Counthood.

『A few things have been omitted. To my grandson who would aim to live as a count, rather than wisdom and experience of how to stand on the battlefield, I thought that learning to rule was more important. No, more than that, there was just no time.』

The Sixth said that, and the Seventh agreed.

From the Founder's perspective, the Walt House had grown too big. Because of that, things that were thought of as unnecessary were removed from their education.

In exchange, refinement based on their elevated positions were thrown in.

『During my time, we were met with peace and stability, so even when I taught my grandson the basics, I put an emphasis on management methods.』

The First and Second were surprised upon hearing that.

『It's as if he's a real noble.』

『In our time, it was field work and monster hunting. Also, dealing with enemies was essential.』

The Fifth let out a sigh.

『He *is* a real noble. Also, are you sure we should be leaving Lyle's future on hold? Even when we've finally racked up some achievements for him?』

Perhaps because he didn't notice it, the Second tilted his head.

『Racked up achievements? That bandit extermination clearly dropped the public opinion of him. And also, in regards to his homeland,

Lyle's already appealed to them to take action with his fruitless efforts.』

The scariest thing was they had no idea what the other side would try to do.

With the Walt House's scope, even if they didn't try to gather information on Lyle, it would flow in regardless.

Even if he was driven out, they were their son's actions.

If they saw some suspicious movement, they may send someone to pursue him. With the current Lyle, fighting one on one against a skilled opponent would be difficult.

That was why he had acted in a foolish manner where they might think they really didn't have to do anything about it.

He acted like a foolish son, where there would be no wonder why he was kicked out.

Of course, since that did drop the name of the Walt House, there was the possibility of them sending an assassin. But then killing him at the start would have been much more efficient.

The monster was disrupting the normality of their decisions. Or perhaps they were simply uninterested…

Regardless, the sort of action the enemy would take would be made clear by this case. That was what they concluded.

The Sixth heard the Second's question and grinned.

『It may have fallen in Dalien, but there's still the truth that Lyle subjugated a bandit brigade. A reputation like that can be manipulated however you want… Just like I controlled it when I took over the Walt House's darkness. Though because of that, my grandson started to hate me.』

The Sixth dropped his shoulders, and the Seventh drummed on them to console him.

The Third smiled as he spoke.

『Rumors are never something to rely on. In Dalien, he's a coward who used the money they had worked hard to save up to overwhelm some lowly thieves with a force of six fold. But they don't deny that he subjugated them. Look, as long as they don't ask how they were defeated, then it's not like you have to tell them.』

Everyone nodded as they looked at the Third.

Having died in battle, the Third Generation was known by the general populace as a famous righteous general who succeeded in aiding a retreating army to reach safety.

But he hardly looked like that sort of person.

『The persuading power sure is different when it's you saying it.』

On the First's cynicism, the Third smiled and agreed.

And he let out a statement concerning Lyle's future.

『Let's say that Lyle becomes successful as an adventurer, and let's say he went back to the Walt house again. Well, that one is based on the individual's will. Now about that monster that our First Generation was talking about. It looks like there was some reality in that..』

Hearing that, those around started to think.

The reason was because Lyle was much greater than they had expected.

Hearing an explanation on Skills, and having undergone minimal training, he was able to pull them off in a few days. He was still unrefined, but still, you could call it astounding.

The First responded with a haughty attitude.

『That's what I told you, didn't I!? And wait, if she's on a level Lyle

can’t win against, Celes must be something quite outrageous herself.』

Celes’s danger level had exceeded the expectations of everyone present.

His first battle. That time he was fighting goblins as well, even if he had comrades, Lyle remained calm.

Even against the bandit brigade’s boss, he never panicked.

He was quite lacking in experience, and there was a problem with his stamina and Mana, but his talent was exceedingly high.

And the Walt house had given birth to a monster not even that Lyle could win against.

『The territory is one thing, but this country’ll be stormy from here on out. I mean, there’s no predicting a monster. Because of that, the old dogs of my generation went through hell.』

【Monster Celes】

That was something that had become a large problem for the House Heads of old.

At first they thought the problems lied with Lyle, but considering the cold reception from his family, he probably hadn’t received a decent education.

The target of comparison was so far out of the norm, that the boy’s abject personality was explainable.

Five years. Being able to withstand that environment for that long was already worthy of assessment.

But Lyle was extraordinary.

For an existence that was able to pay him no mind, it wasn’t strange for one to call them a monster.

They had no choice but to pay heed to the existences the First Generation referred to as monsters.

『Overwhelming power, and on top of that, a selfish personality. This'll be troublesome.』

The Fifth spoke, and the Sixth agreed with him.

『If Celes runs wild, perhaps even the Walt house will fall to ruin. If you think of that, there's some good fortune in Lyle getting driven out. Our bloodline will still remain.』

The First voiced his approval.

『Right. If he becomes an adventurer and raises some money, should we go raise a village again? We can even leave Bahnseim behind this time. Novem-chan and Aria-chan are with him. We can't be putting them through anything dangerous…』

But it wasn't an accepting mood for that notion.

Everyone present wanted to do something if there was something they could do.

『The path that Lyle decides to tread will become important. Of course, it's Novem-chan that has gotten me a little curious.』

On the Third Generation's words, the Second seemed fed up.

『You're still on about that? Do you think that every good kid out there has secret intentions and malicious thoughts? She's a pure maiden who seriously believed in Lyle's lie!』

And on the Second's attempt at convincing him, it was the Third's turn to be fed up.

However, the Fifth sided with him.

『Even if she's scheming something, there's no way she'll bring harm to Lyle, so isn't it fine if we just leave it? If she did intend harm, there

would be no reason for her to serve him this far. Also… are we going to be kicking Aria out at this point?』

On the Fifth's opinion, the faces in the area turned troubled.

Her father had connections with bandits, and he was to slave in the mines to atone. On top of that, she had lost everything and been driven out of her home.

The First made a complicated expression.

『She's the exact likeness of my first love, but seeing my descendant marry her leaves quite a strange taste, though.』

The Seventh spoke.

『It's because you got Lyle to do those unnecessary things that it came down to this! If you had just cooperated with him at once, we would have gotten on without these peculiar worries.』

The Fourth dragged the conversation on track again.

『Well then, until Lyle decides his future plans, let's put this matter aside. Good work everyone.』

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Left alone in the conference room, the First Generation folded his arms and sat atop the chair with his legs crossed.

Who he was thinking of was Lyle.

『If you just consider pure and utter talent, there's no doubt he's above us, I see.』

The precepts that had launched from one line the First had said at a

party.

Perhaps… they had honed the Walt House's bloodline.

Lyle's ability was currently lacking in experience, but even so, he had the greatest latent potential out of any of the Heads of History.

『… With that, he'd easily surpass me when I was most active.』

He muttered that, sprung up, and landed on the floor.

『Well, well, well. With the seven in the Jewel, and his own Skill on top of that, just what sort of monster will he become… If there really was someone out there who could stop that Celes, then perhaps it's no one but Lyle.』

The First Generation… Basil Walt walked towards his room, as a grin quietly erupted on his face.

『Well then, it's time I put an earnest effort into helping him. The day when he learns to use the third stage may come, so I've got to train for that… It may not even take that much time.』

He opened the door and entered his room.

『And it won't be long before my teaching comes to an end…』

The door slowly closed.

There wasn't a soul in the conference room.